

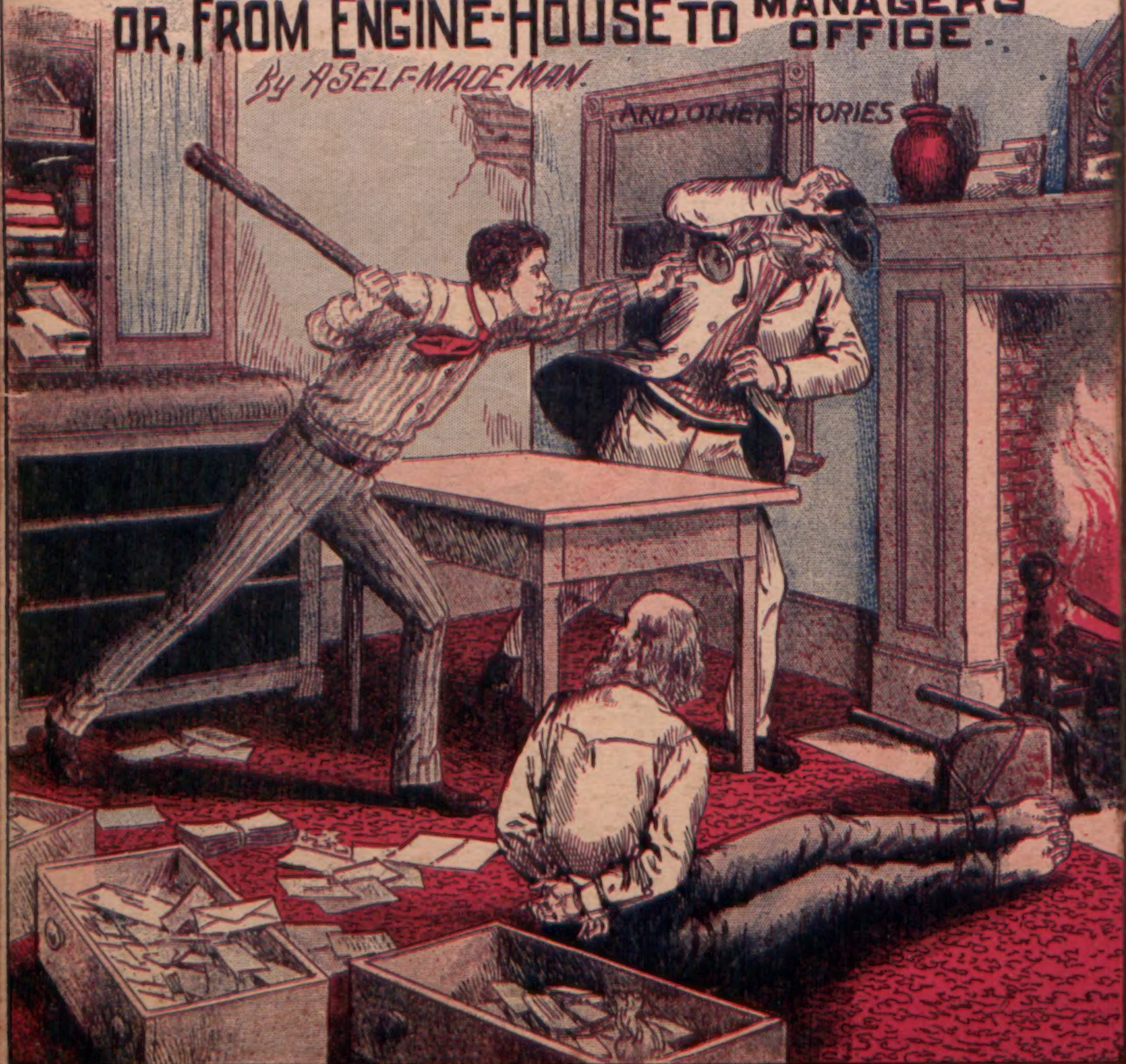
FAME ^{AND} FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS THAT MAKE MONEY.

DICK DARRELL'S NERVE; OR, FROM ENGINE-HOUSE TO MANAGER'S OFFICE.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

AND OTHER STORIES



Quick as a flash, Dick seized the candlestick and flung it into the rascal's face. The fellow threw up his hands, but not quick enough to avoid getting a stunning blow on the forehead. He uttered a roar of pain.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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DICK DARREL'S NERVE

—OR—

FROM ENGINE HOUSE TO MANAGER'S OFFICE

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

CHAPTER I.

A YOUNG TYRANT AND HIS VICTIM.

"Whoop-ee!"

With a wild, lusty yell a tattered, black-faced boy, with bare, sooty legs, sprang out of the doorway of the Keystone breaker a quarter of a minute after the whistle for knocking off work for the day began its shrill toot.

A stream of other smoky-looking lads, whose ages ranged from ten to thirteen, followed at his heels, whooping like a band of Comanche Indians executing a weird war-dance.

The whole crew, led by the first youth, whose name was Micky Grady, dashed down the flight of wooden stairs on the outside of the building, and began a stampede for the near-by village, where they lived in poor-looking cottages built by the coal company and rented to its employees.

A short distance away stood the culm-heap, a massive pile of coal-dust covering acres of ground, and stretching down to the brink of a big river, whose deep waters rolled by, dark and forbidding, in the gathering twilight.

The long valley was dotted over with several such black and unsightly heaps, made up of the refuse and dust of coal, as gathered from it during its process of preparation in the Keystone and other breakers.

Both in summer and winter it was a common thing to see numbers of ragged, black-faced and bare-footed girls, and grown-up women, too, with black bags, scattered over these heaps gathering up the stray fragments of coal that lay there, and were thrown in with the slate by the careless slate-pickers.

These scavengers of the culm-heaps were called "black crows," and it was the constant delight of the breaker-boys to tease and annoy those that seemed to be fair game for their jibes.

On this particular afternoon, or rather evening, for dusk was slowly creeping upon the face of nature, a little girl of ten years, all alone, was filling her bag and preparing to return home with the fuel she had collected, when the breaker-boys were released from their work.

"There's a black crow!" yelled one of the rudest boys, catching sight of the little girl.

"Black crow! Black crow!" sang out several of his companions.

"Let's throw her into the river?" said one chap, making a bluff to run up the culm-heap.

The heap was of considerable height, and the little bare-foot was at its top when she was startled by the yelling of the slate-pickers.

"Hold on, fellers," interposed Micky Grady, pausing in his rush for home. "That looks like Pansy Blossom. You don't want to touch her, on you'll have Dick Darrell after you like a ton of bricks."

"Who cares for Dick Darrell?" replied the youth who had suggested throwing the girl into the river. "Me brother Packy kin knock the stuffin' out of him."

"He can—like fun," replied Grady scornfully. "He can't lick one side of Dick Darrell, and you know it."

"What do yer know what me brother kin do?" snorted the rough lad, who answered to the name of Jimmy Sanders. "Mebbe yer think yer kin lick me, Micky Grady?"

"I can lick you with one hand," returned Grady, starting for Jimmy.

Young Sanders, believing that discretion was the better part of valor, was about to take to his heels when a big, husky, freckle-faced boy suddenly appeared on the scene.

Jimmy recognized him as his brother Packy, and his courage returned.

"You jest come in time, Packy," said Jimmy. "Micky Grady was goin' to slug me wit' a piece of coal, 'cause he can't lick me wit' his fists."

"He was, eh?" growled Packy, glowering at Grady. "Jest let me catch him a-doin' it and I'll knock him lopsided."

"He's a liar!" cried Micky indignantly. "Do you see any coal in my hand?"

"He dropped it when he seen yer," chipped in Jimmy.

"I dropped nothin'," replied Micky, shaking his fist threateningly at Jimmy.

"If you touch my brother I'll push yer face in. Understand?" roared Packy.

"Aw, forget it!" snorted Micky, backing away, for he was no match for Jimmy's big brother.

"He says Dick Darrell kin knock blue blazes out of yer wit' one hand," said Jimmy.

"What's that?" snarled Packy, between whom and Darrell there existed a personal feud of several years' duration.

Jimmy repeated his statement.

"Did you say that?" Packy demanded of Grady.

"I said you couldn't lick one side of Dick Darrell, and I say it ag'in," replied Micky, backing still further away.

"I kin lick two like him, if yer want to know it," ejaculated Packy, his eyes twinkling with anger.

"You wouldn't say that if he was around, you big stiff!" cried Grady, feeling safe at the distance between himself and the bully of the mine.

While the foregoing dialogue was going on the little girl remained standing on the top of the culm-heap.

All the breaker-boys, with the exception of Micky and Jimmy, had disappeared in the distance, but she was afraid to come down while Jimmy and his big brother were in the vicinity.

She didn't fear Micky, because she recognized him as a friend.

Grady was right when he said her name was Pansy Blossom.

DICK DARRELL'S NERVE.

She was a pretty girl when tidied up, and the youngest daughter of Ben Blossom, a shiftless miner, who was drunk more than half his time.

Their poor but well-kept little home in the village was presided over by her sister Myrtle, sixteen years of age, and the belle of the mining village.

Myrtle had many admirers, on account of her beauty and lovely disposition.

Two of these only we need mention—Dick Darrell, whom she favored, and Packy Sanders, whom she detested.

Dick Darrell, the hero of this story, was a good-looking, stalwart boy of eighteen.

He had drifted into the mining regions nearly five years since, and had got a job as mule driver in the galleries below the surface.

After working four years in the gloomy depths where the black diamonds were dug out, he was transferred, as general helper, to the engine-room attached to the breaker house.

Here he had been working and giving satisfaction for the past nine months.

He boarded at the Blossom cottage, and it was largely his money that kept the pot boiling.

Packy Sanders was the oldest son of Bill Sanders, a miner, and he was generally regarded as a hard case.

He tended the coal chute which ran from the screen-room of the breaker to a point outside above the car track, where the cars were loaded with coal after it had been separated from the dust and slate; but he held his job only by the skin of his teeth.

He had a standing grouch against Dick Darrell because Dick was his superior in every way, and, furthermore, he hated him because he stood first favorite with Myrtle Blossom, while he (Packy) wasn't in it with her even a little bit.

Packy would not admit that he had any doubts about his ability to put it all over Darrell if the two came to blows, but just the same he did not court an encounter with the sturdy engineer's assistant.

He never attempted to bully Dick but once, when the boy first came to the mines, and for reasons best known to himself he did not repeat the performance.

Micky Grady was a particular friend of Darrell's, and his sarcastic remark that Packy "couldn't lick one side of Dick Darrell" made young Sanders furious.

That speech betrayed him into uttering the boast that he could whip two like Darrell, whereupon Grady said that Packy wouldn't say that in Dick's presence.

"Just wait till I catch you, Micky Grady! I'll wipe the ground with yer," said Packy in answer to the slate-picker's defiant reply.

"You'll wipe the ground with nothin', you lobster, unless it is your own face!" retorted Micky, emboldened because Packy made no attempt to go for him.

"There's one of them black crows all by herself on the heap behind yer," put in Jimmy Sanders. "Micky says if we touch her we'll have Dick Darrell after us like a ton of bricks. I guess you and me don't care nothin' about Darrell. That gal hain't got no right 'round here at this time of the day, and we ought to go up there, take her bag of coal away and chase her home, if only to show that we hain't afraid of Dick Darrell or anybody like him."

Packy looked up at the summit of the culm-heap and saw Pansy standing there waiting for him and Jimmy to go away.

He didn't recognize her, as her face was streaked with coal-dust, and her loose hair was flying about it.

Ordinarily he wouldn't have bothered with one of the "black crows," even to oblige his brother; but Micky Grady's remark had galled him, and he determined to annoy the girl if only to make Darrell mad when he heard about it.

Accordingly, calling on his brother to follow, Packy sprang up the side of the black mound with a yell, echoed by Jimmy.

"Run, you little black crow, or we'll duck you in the river!" roared Packy menacingly.

Pansy, instead of taking to her heels and flying across the heap, as they looked for her to do, for their purpose was to chase her first, and frighten her as much as possible before they deprived her of her bag of coal and pushed her down into the road, stood stock-still, terrorized by the sudden rush.

Micky, observing this belligerent move on the Sanders' part toward Pansy, and foreseeing trouble ahead for the little girl whom he liked, darted off toward the nearby en-

gine-house, where Dick Darrell was finishing his duties for the day.

Packy soon reached the top of the heap of coal-dust, with his brother close behind him.

"Run, I tell yer, run, yer black crow! Run for yer life!" he roared, rushing at her like a miniature cyclone.

Pansy was too frightened to either run or scream.

Holding her bag of coal pressed tightly against her body she sank on her knees and bent over it to protect it.

This action on her part disappointed Packy and made him mad.

He wanted the fun of chasing her.

He yearned to hear her screams of terror as she flew wild-eyed across the heap.

He wished to hunt her down, like a hound chasing its quarry.

Instead of which she wouldn't run.

She was spoiling all the satisfaction he had anticipated getting out of her.

"Why don't yer run?" he shouted, dancing about the girl like a lunatic, and making all sorts of hideous faces at her. "Run, or we'll toss yer into the river!"

Packy had really no intention of throwing her into the river.

But there is no tyrant so cruel as a bad boy when he finds one who is weaker than himself wholly at his mercy.

Finding that she wouldn't move, Packy made a swoop at her bag of coal, and seizing it, tried to tear it from her.

Then Pansy found her tongue and began to scream, while she hugged her precious burden closer to her.

"Let go, will yer?" snarled Packy, losing his temper. "Let go, or it will be wuss for yer!"

He tugged at the bag, dragging the girl about on the dusty heap.

"Help! Help!" cried Pansy, clinging desperately to the bag that contained the fruits of a hard hour's toil.

"Shut up!" roared Packy.

Jimmy, without offering to help his big brother, gazed on the scrap with intense delight.

The little girl's frantic fight to save her bag of black diamonds was grand fun for him, while her success in retaining a grip upon it enraged Packy.

He forgot, or did not care, that he was dealing with almost a child.

His dogged, obstinate resistance brought all his base instincts to the fore.

In his fury he did not care if he broke her arms, for he was determined not to be outgeneraled by a little girl.

Exerting his strength he fairly raised her in the air and swung her off her feet.

At that intense moment a newcomer, followed by Micky Grady, appeared on the scene.

He wore an oil-stained blouse, and his face was dark and streaky with grease and the grime of the engineroom.

In a word, it was Dick Darrell.

He bounded up the culm-heap with clenched fists and fire in his eyes, spurred on by Pansy's piteous screams.

As he reached the top and rushed at Packy, intent on putting a stop to his attack on the little girl, Pansy, swinging in the air, lost her grasp on the bag.

She was flung clear over the outer edge of the mound, while Packy, losing his balance by the unexpected release of her weight, fell back head over heels in the coal-dust, the bag dropping from his hands.

With a shrill scream of terror Pansy rolled down with swift momentum to the foot of the heap of coal-dust and bounded off into the river with a splash, the water closing over her head.

Dick reached the edge of the mound in time to see her disappear.

With a gasp of consternation he tore down the side and dived in after her.

CHAPTER II.

SAVED FROM THE RIVER.

As the dark waters flowed serenely over the spot where Pansy and Dick had disappeared in quick succession, Micky Grady and Jimmy Sanders ran to the edge of the mound and gazed down at the river in a species of terror.

Packy, after wallowing in the dust a moment, pulled himself together, gazed stupidly around after his victim, and

then, with a cowardly fear gripping his heart, he slouched up beside his brother and Micky.

"Where's the crow?" he asked his brother, in faltering tones.

"In the river," replied Jimmy. "Yer t'rowed her in."

"Ye're a liar! I didn't. She fell in herself," he answered, shaking all over, not from a sense of remorse, but for fear of possible consequences to himself.

"Yer did t'row her in," persisted Jimmy. "I seen yer do it."

The younger Sanders appeared to have little feeling with regard to his brother's predicament.

Packy insisted that he didn't throw the girl into the river.

"I seen you do it, too," said Micky Grady, feeling that he could afford to be as bold as he chose under the circumstances. "If she's drowned you'll be hung."

Packy turned white at the bare thought of such a fate.

"Don't get-skeered," said Jimmy. "Somebody ran up and jumped in after her."

"That was Dick Darrell," said Micky. "There he is now, and he's got hold of her."

The boys could just see two heads on the surface of the river a short distance away.

From the movement of one of the heads there was no doubt but it was Darrell's.

He was swimming up the river, with the unconscious form of Pansy supported by his left arm, and he was looking for a place to land.

Dick was a strong swimmer, but he made slow progress against the river.

It would have been much easier for him to go in the opposite direction, that is, away from the village, but he knew it would be hard to land on account of the long culm-heap.

By swimming against the current he had only a hundred feet to go to find a place to step ashore, and toward that spot Micky ran to assist him.

Grady waited for the engineer's assistant to approach.

"Raise the gal up to me, Dick," he said, reaching down his arm.

Darrell did so, and Micky, seizing the insensible Pansy by the hand, hauled her on the bank.

"She ain't dead, is she?" asked the slate-picker apprehensively.

"No," replied Dick. "She'll come around all right."

The speaker dragged himself out of the water, and, picking the little girl up in his arms, started for the engine-room with her.

"You ought to lick the stuffin' out'r Packy Sanders for throwin' her in," said Micky earnestly.

"I'm going to report his conduct to the justice, though I hardly think he meant to throw Pansy into the river. He's pretty tough, but it doesn't seem possible that he had murder in his heart."

"Didn't you see him fling her in the air? Then she went flyin' out of sight over the edge of the heap. If he didn't throw her into the water how could she have got there?"

Micky seemed to consider his argument unanswerable.

Pansy began to stir in Dick's arms, and by the time they reached the door of the engine-house she had recovered her senses.

She recognized Darrell and clung convulsively to him.

"You're all right, Pansy," said Dick, encouragingly.

"I thought I was in the water," she faltered.

"You were in the water, but you're safe on shore again."

"Packy Sanders threw you in, didn't he?" asked Micky, who wanted to secure convincing evidence on that point.

"I don't know. He threatened to do it if I wouldn't give up my bag of coal. I suppose he did do it, or I wouldn't have fallen in the river."

"There, I told you so!" said Grady triumphantly to Darrell.

"How came you to save me, Dick?" asked the girl. "I didn't see you around."

"I reached the top of the heap just as you went over the edge and rolled down to the water," replied the engineer's assistant.

"And you jumped in after me?"

"Yes. I wasn't going to stand by and see you drown."

Pansy threw her arms around the boy's neck and kissed him.

"Hello!" said Murray, the engineer, coming to the door and noting the dripping condition of Darrell and the little girl. "You look as if you'd been in the river, Dick. Did you jump in after that girl?"

Dick said he did.

"How did she come to fall in?"

Dick explained.

"Who is she?"

"Pansy Blossom," replied the boy.

"One of old Blossom's gals, eh? It's lucky for her you were on hand to fish her out of the river, otherwise she'd have been drowned, I guess."

"I'm afraid she would," replied Dick.

"She's a sight. Must have been picking coal on the culm-heap."

"That's what she was. She will do it, though Myrtle and I have tried to stop her."

"Take her into the boiler-room. The boat will dry some of the dampness out of her clothes, and yours, too. Then you'd better take her right home. I'll stay here and finish your work."

"Thank you, Mr. Murray," said Dick.

"Don't mention it. Of course you'll report the matter to the superintendent. There isn't much doubt but he'll discharge Packy Sanders. He's only waiting for an excuse to do it. He's the toughest boy in the neighborhood. He ought to be arrested and punished, too, for endangering the girl's life."

"I'm going to bring the matter to the attention of Justice Robinson," said Dick. "While I don't believe Packy intended throwing Pansy into the river, still he was the cause of her falling in. He treated her shamefully. You must have heard her screams."

"I did, but I hear so much screaming around here from the gals who come to pick up coal that I pay little attention to it any more," replied the engineer.

Murray, who had followed them into the boiler-room, now returned to his own department to finish what had to be done for the night.

It was pretty near dark by this time, and while Pansy stood before the open furnace door she bewailed the loss of her bag and the coal it contained.

"I'll go up on the heap and see if I can find it," volunteered Micky, starting for the doorway.

He returned inside of a few minutes with the bag and its contents intact.

"There you are, Pansy," he said in a tone of satisfaction. "Don't say I never done nothin' for you."

The girl thanked him in a shy manner.

She liked Micky in her childish way just as the slate-picker liked her.

As soon as Dick thought Pansy was dry enough to stand the night air he said that they would start for home.

Micky accompanied them a large part of the way and then left them and went home.

Supper was all ready and waiting at the Blossom cottage when Dick and Pansy arrived.

Myrtle fairly gasped when she saw the condition of her sister.

"Pansy Blossom! You naughty girl! You've been to the culm-heap again."

"Worse than that, Myrtle," said Dick. "She's been in the river."

"In the river!" cried Myrtle, turning pale.

She grabbed her sister and felt of her rumpled dress.

"How did it happen?" she said, turning to Dick.

The boy told her the particulars as far as he was acquainted with them.

"She would have been drowned only for you, Dick," replied Myrtle with tears in her eyes. "You don't know how grateful I am to you. It would have broken my heart if anything had happened to her."

"Well, as long as she's safe and uninjured you have no cause to worry."

"I shall never forget what we both owe you as long as I live," replied the girl.

"All right," said the boy lightly, "we'll let it go at that."

Myrtle seized her sister and hurried her upstairs to her room, while Dick went to his room to change his own damp garments and tidy himself up.

CHAPTER III.

THE SHADOW OF TROUBLE.

After supper that evening Dick Darrell, taking Pansy with him, called on Justice Robinson, who exercised a supervision over the moral welfare of the mining village.

He explained to the justice what had happened on the

culm-heap that evening, and said he thought Packy Sanders ought to be punished in some way for bullying a little girl like Pansy, and nearly causing her death.

Mr. Robinson asked the girl to tell her story, which she did.

"This isn't the first complaint I've had about that lad," said the justice. "He has a bad reputation. It's time he was brought up with a round turn."

The lawyer sent Dick out to find the chief constable.

When Darrell returned with the officer the justice handed the constable a warrant for Packy's arrest and told him to go over to the Sanders cottage and serve it.

Jimmy Sanders was in the yard when he saw Constable Green enter by the front gate.

Everybody in the village knew the officer, and Jimmy, suspecting that the constable was after his brother, rushed into the kitchen where Packy was sitting.

"Yer want to get out of here quick, Packy," he said excitedly.

"What for?" replied his brother in a disagreeable tone.

"Cause Constable Green is after yer. Hear him poundin' on the front door?"

Packy heard the rapping, turned pale and jumped on his feet.

"How do you know it's the constable?"

"I seen him come in the yard."

That was enough for Packy.

His conscience assured him that he was wanted, and he decided to skip at once.

He grabbed his cap and made for the back door.

"Where yer goin'?" asked his brother.

"Dunno," he answered. "Mebbe across the river."

"You wait down by the wharf till I come. I'll try and find out if Green came to pinch yer for throwin' Pansy Blossom into the river to-night."

"What else would he want me for?" growled Packy as he laid his hand on the back fence and prepared to vault over it into the yard of a vacant cottage.

"He might want yer for somet'in' else, yer can't tell. Didn't yer tell me that yer pinched a dollar bill out of Dan Crowley's pocket last night when yer helped him home from the tavern, 'cause he was too drunk to walk alone?"

At that moment the back door opened and Packy's mother looked out and called him.

He sprang over the fence in a moment and started across the weed-grown yard for the street beyond, leaving Jimmy to explain the cause of his sudden disappearance.

Constable Green failed to arrest Packy, and so reported to the justice.

"Well, you have the warrant," said the lawyer. "You can arrest him in the morning at the breaker."

Packy, however, knew better than to report for work in the morning.

By that time he was hiding on board a stranded coal barge a mile below the village, where he believed he was safe from the constable.

Jimmy knew where his brother was, and at Packy's request had tipped off a couple of his vicious associates, who were not working, to his place of refuge.

Packy arranged with these young rascals to keep him supplied with food, and they also spent most of their time with him in the hold of the barge, playing cards and smoking cigarettes.

On the morning following the incident at the culm-heap Dick was busily engaged polishing up a part of the brass-work on the engine when Murray, the engineer, who maintained a very friendly attitude toward him, stopped beside him, and after watching his nimble fingers for a moment or two, said:

"I s'pose you heard that Martin Drake was discharged yesterday morning?"

"Yes. What was he discharged for?"

"Because he takes too much booze, for one thing; but chiefly because he's got to be a shirker. Taylor, who knows when a man works and when he loafs, swears he won't have him about the mine doing nothing but getting the rest of the miners all in a tangle. So he paid him off and fired him."

"Did he put up much of a kick?"

"He did that. He told the superintendent that the Miners' Alliance, of which he is one of the officers, would demand his reinstatement."

"Then there may be trouble over his discharge," said Dick, transferring his attention to another brass oil-cup.

"I wouldn't be surprised if there was," replied the engineer. "Drake has got the ear of most of the officers of the Alliance, and he will try to make them believe that he was bounced, not because he lagged at his work, but because the company knows he is powerful in the society, and is aiming a blow at the union through him."

"Mr. Taylor is superintendent, and has a right to discharge any one for cause, hasn't he?" asked Dick.

"That is certainly part of his business. He's responsible for the conduct of things at the mine, and is accorded a free hand by the company, the officers of which have every confidence in his ability. At any rate, he's evidently made good, for he's been in full charge these five years."

"Well, I don't see what Drake can do. If he's bounced he's bounced, and that settles it."

"That doesn't settle it."

"Why not?" asked the boy in surprise.

"The Miners' Alliance is a strong organization. It takes in every miner in the district. Drake is a smooth talker. If he can convince the heads of the society that his discharge is really a slap at the Alliance, they may make it a union job, and then there'll be mischief."

"Do you mean to say that the Alliance would demand that Drake be put back to work after being fired for good reasons?"

"If the society believes that Drake was discharged chiefly because he is a strenuous union man, they'll certainly demand his reinstatement."

"But if the society sends a committee to see Taylor he will explain exactly why he discharged Drake. That will show that unionism had nothing to do with the case."

"The Alliance might not accept the superintendent's statement as the real expression of his own, or the company's, feeling on the subject."

"You're a member of the Alliance, aren't you, Mr. Murray?"

"I'm rather an important member of the Keystone Branch, for I'm the local secretary."

"I judge from your talk that you believe Drake has only got what was coming to him."

"Between you, me and the post, my lad, that is my opinion."

"Then your word with the society ought to be as good as Drake's."

"I'm afraid it isn't. He's vice-president of our branch, and is several times more popular than I am, because he spends his money freely, which I can't afford to do with my growing family, and is looked upon as a good fellow."

"If you see that Drake is making trouble just to help himself out of a hole you can express your opinion, can't you?"

"Yes, I can do that; but I haven't the gift of gab that he has. I've seen him twist that bit of cotton waste around that oil-cup. Then there's another difficulty. A fellow must stick to his union even if the cause isn't as good as he'd like it to be. If our branch should vote to sustain Drake I'd have to fall in line no matter what my private opinion might be. You see, as local secretary I'm scarcely a free agent in any matter connected with the miners' union."

"Then if the Alliance stands up for Drake, and demands his reinstatement, you will back him up though you know he is in the wrong?" said Dick.

The engineer nodded, though a bit reluctantly.

"Well, I wouldn't do it," replied the boy resolutely. "If I was sure a certain course was the right one I'd take it in face of everything."

"You couldn't do it, my lad, if you belonged to a union. It's pull one, pull all. That's where the strength of any organization lies. The members have the right to get up in the meeting and object to any proposed line of action, but if their side is voted down then they must accept the will of the majority. It's right enough, when one looks at it fairly, though it may work unjustly at times; but as no man is perfect, a collection or union of men can hardly be expected to be always right."

"Do you really think the society will support Drake?"

"It is impossible for me to say what our branch will do. You see, the men have several grudges against the company, anyway, which, for one reason or another, have never been brought to an issue. These things are bound to influence the feelings of the men, and it's just as like as not they'll put everything together and make a fight of it."

"But I don't see why the union should assume the right to dictate what the superintendent should or should not do. He's employed to run this mine. If the company is satisfied with the way he's doing it what right have the miners to interfere?"

"I'm afraid I can't argue the matter with you, Dick. When you get older, and join the union yourself, you'll come to understand things better."

"Perhaps I will, if I ever become a member of a union, but it is my ambition to be at the head of a business of my own."

"It takes capital to become one's own boss, and large capital, too, in these days of trusts and combinations of interests. The day of the small mine owner, and manufacturer, is almost past. How are you going to get a sufficient capital to start out on a paying basis?"

"That's a question the future must decide," replied Dick. "All I can say now is that a fellow with grit and energy has a good chance to succeed in this country. The man who lectured down here last winter on success in life said that Fortune knocks at the door of every man at least once in his lifetime. Well, I'm going to be on the watch for that one time. When Fortune comes she won't find me asleep, you can bet your life. I'll be on hand with both feet."

Murray nodded approvingly and was about to say something when the fireman appeared and called him into the boiler-room, leaving Dick to finish his work on the brass-work and think about what the future had in store for him.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MISCHIEF BREEDER.

Martin Drake soon demonstrated the strength of his influence over his fellow-workmen.

He interviewed man after man on the quiet, and told the facts of his discharge in a skillful manner, so as to leave as far in the background as possible the superintendent's real motive in bouncing him.

In addition to this he got two or three of his particular friends to back him up, and to declare that the local branch of the Alliance had no choice but to make his grievance theirs, and to officially insist that he be put back to work again.

He and his family ignored the notice served on them by the superintendent to vacate, within a reasonable time, the company's cottage occupied by them.

Drake intended to leave no stone unturned to carry his point if he could.

Late on the afternoon of the day on which the conversation recorded in the previous chapter took place between the engineer and Dick Darrell, Drake appeared at the engine-room and buttonholed Murray.

The engineer listened to his arguments with little enthusiasm, and the bounced miner scowled unpleasantly.

"If you ain't with me you're ag'in me, Jack Murray," Dick heard him say in a menacing kind of tone.

"I don't see that you've made out any kind of case against the super," replied the engineer in a conciliatory way, for no one knew better than Murray that Drake was a bad man to have for an enemy.

"I hain't?" snarled the visitor aggressively. "Why hain't I? This here matter concerns the society as much as it does me."

"I don't see how it does," answered Murray calmly.

"You mean you won't see it. Every one I've talked to but you is agreed that somethin' ought to be done. I haven't paid my dues into the Alliance for six years and more to be trod on as if I was a worm. No man is goin' to sit on my neck, mark my words on that. I look to the society for my rights, seein' as I can't get justice myself from Taylor. What right has that man to discharge me after I've been here six years workin' hard for the company? If he can do that with impunity is your job safe, or any one else's at the mine? You might be thrown down any day yourself, without notice, like I was, to make way for some favorite of the super's. I say this high-handed way of runnin' things has got to be nipped in the bud, or every man in the company's service is liable to be bullied and fired when Taylor chooses to show his authority."

"I haven't heard that any man who does right by the company has been interfered with in any way," replied Murray.

"I s'pose that is as much as to say that I hain't done the right thing?" snorted Drake. "I should have worked twice as hard, eh? I should have slaved till I dropped down dead, and left my family to be taken care of by the society? Well, I'm not built that way, d'ye understand? I'm a man, and not a mouse," and Drake thumped the wall of the engine-room with his fist.

"When a man boozes as much as you have the reputation of doing he isn't in condition to do his best work."

"Whose business is it whether I booze or not?" asked Drake wrathfully. "I don't do it in the company's time. After I knock off work I've a right to do as I think fit. Eight hours for work, eight hours for sleep, and eight hours to do as you dern please. That's the motto of the society. Have you got anythin' to say ag'in it?"

"Of course not; but one can't sleep eight hours if he bums around the tavern till midnight."

"I s'pose that's a slap at me? Well, it ain't your business, or Taylor's, or anybody else's, whether I sleep eight hours or four hours as long as I work through the schedule time."

Murray said nothing, but mechanically took out his pipe, filled the bowl with tobacco from a fancy bag and lighted it with some deliberation.

Drake glared at him in an ugly way.

It was evident that he was angry clear through at the engineer's opposition.

"I've stuck by the society for six years, and I say the society should stick by me," he said as Murray began coaxing the tobacco into a red glow.

"The superintendent claims that he discharged you because you haven't done a fair day's work in a month," said the engineer.

"He's a liar! He sacked me because I'm an officer of the union."

"There are other officers besides you, myself, for instance, and I haven't heard that any of us are in danger of losing our heads."

"You will lose 'em in time. He had to begin with somebody, so he picked me out as the first victim."

"Where did you get your knowledge from?"

"That's my business," replied Drake sullenly.

"You'd better get your facts together, Drake, so as to be able to present them at the meeting to-morrow night. If you can show that your discharge has been made for the purpose of weakening the union in this district the society will support you, all right."

"I can show it."

"You're a good talker, Drake, but mere words won't do any good. You must produce proof. Recollect, the company has a written agreement for three years with the union, and it has rights as well as we have."

"Yah!" snarled Drake, his eyes roving around the engine-room.

He saw Dick Darrell's gaze fastened on him with interested attention.

"What are you listenin' for, you young monkey?" he roared. "Git, d'ye understand? We don't want no kids around."

Dick moved slowly away, and as he did so he looked at the clock.

He saw it wanted five minutes of five, closing down time.

It was his duty to let off the whistle, so he sauntered as far as the door to put in the five minutes looking across the road at a score or more "black crows" strung along the top of the culm-heap, all busy with their black bags.

Drake seemed to have reached the end of his tether, for he had little more to say about the matter that had brought him to the engine-room.

The interview had been entirely unsatisfactory to him.

He saw he could expect no support from the engineer, who was a sober and steady man, much respected by the majority of the members of the local branch of the Miners' Alliance.

He was particularly anxious to secure Murray's influence on his side, for he knew even better than the engineer did himself that his opinion carried considerable weight with the conservative members of the branch, who were in the majority.

Drake knew that he could only count on the vacillating and hot-headed members with any degree of certainty, but with Murray on his side his chances of swinging the society into line was good.

The discharged miner was a slick talker, with specious arguments without number at his fingers' ends.

He could convince some persons that black was white, and was able to make some impression on almost every listener.

But he was up against it when he tackled Murray, for the engineer never allowed himself to be carried away by mere empty eloquence.

Thus it was when Dick blew the whistle which ended work for the day, Martin Drake left the engine-room thoroughly disgruntled and with an ugly scowl on his countenance.

On the following night, at the regular monthly meeting of the Keystone Branch of the Miners' Alliance, Drake brought his grievance before the members.

He was listened to with attention, and was supported by half a dozen of the best speakers.

When the Drake bunch had said all they wanted to Murray got up.

Martin glared at him like a wild beast.

He dreaded the engineer's cool, unimpassioned way of appealing to the common sense of the society.

Murray, however, had very little to say on the subject.

He merely advised the members to go slow about taking issue on a matter that was not as yet corroborated by sufficient evidence to warrant making it a union affair.

"I move that a committee be appointed to wait on Mr. Taylor and find out his side of the question," he said. "After the committee has reported to the president he can call a special meeting to consider the matter in all its bearings. If, in the meantime, Drake can secure proofs sufficient to substantiate his statements, it will greatly simplify the case, and the society may see its way clear to take some action looking to Drake's reinstatement."

Murray's motion was duly seconded, but before the president could put the question Bill Sanders, a particular crony of Drake's, jumped up and moved as an amendment to the motion that the committee be also instructed to request the superintendent to put Martin Drake back to work.

The engineer, to Drake's satisfaction, offered no objection to the amendment, and the motion and amendment, on being put to a vote, were carried.

The president then proceeded to appoint a committee of three, and Drake succeeded in getting Sanders selected as one of them.

The meeting then adjourned, and while the majority of the miners went directly home to go to bed, Drake and his friends adjourned to the tavern to discuss across the bar further action in case the committee's report was not favorable.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT DICK OVERHEARD IN THE TAVERN.

The committee appointed by the president of the society lost no time in waiting on Superintendent Taylor and stating the object of their visit.

The superintendent received them in his private office and listened to the spokesman's request as to the cause of Drake's discharge.

Taylor answered very frankly.

He said that Drake's work and general conduct had been for some time very unsatisfactory.

He had warned the man by deputy, but it did no good, so, as he wouldn't stand for any man who refused to do his full duty by the company, he had discharged him.

The deputation heard the superintendent through and then made a request for his reinstatement, the spokesman intimating that the society expected it.

The committee, in permitting their spokesman to insinuate that the society was back of Drake, exceeded their instructions, but Bill Sanders had bulldozed the other two into acting as he wished them to.

The hint was not lost on Taylor, but he would not give way an inch.

"Look here, my men," he replied in a resolute tone, "when I say or do a thing I mean it. You ought to know that by this time. I want no loafers or trouble-breeders at this mine, and I won't have them. This is a matter between Drake and me, and your society has nothing whatever to do with it. As for taking him back to work, I refuse to do it. He's out now, and that means he's out for good. He and his family have already received notice to give up their cottage. Drake will be given a reasonable time in which to

find a job elsewhere before a formal dispossession is served upon him. Now you have my answer, and I hope you understand that it is a final one. Under no circumstances will I reinstate your man."

"If you don't put him back there'll be trouble," said Sanders with an ugly look.

The superintendent turned on him like a flash.

"Are you authorized to make such a statement?" he said sharply.

Sanders looked confused and made no reply.

Taylor turned to the spokesman and repeated his question.

"No, sir," replied the man, intimidated by the superintendent's manner.

"Then I am to understand that Sanders made that remark on his own responsibility?" continued Taylor. "Answer me!" he added sternly as the spokesman hesitated.

"Yes, sir."

"Another question, please. Are you officially instructed by the society to intimate to me that your branch proposes to make common cause with Drake?"

"No, sir," replied the man humbly.

"That's all. You have my answer. I wish you good afternoon."

Thus dismissed, the three men slipped out of the office feeling very cheap, indeed.

As soon as they were outside the spokesman and his companion turned angrily on Sanders.

"You see what your fool advice has led to?" said the former. "We had no right to try and intimidate the super, and we've got it in the neck for doing it. If the members get wind of what we did we'll get a calling down at the next meeting that will make our hair curl."

"You won't be such a fool as to tell, will you?" growled Sanders.

"Of course not, but the fact might leak out."

"How will it?"

"The superintendent is liable to comment on it, and in that way the men may get to hear about it."

"We kin deny that we said anythin' about the society bein' at Martin's back."

"Well, I don't like the hole we've put ourselves in. Instead of taking the super's answer and walking out like men, we were dismissed like whipped curs, and we deserved it, too. It's your fault, Bill Sanders," said the spokesman in disgust. "You talked us into putting up a big bluff, but it didn't work worth a cent. You got a pretty sharp and sweet call-down yourself, too. You'll be lucky if the super takes no further notice of your unauthorized remark."

"What do you mean by that?" snorted Sanders.

"You are liable to be a marked man in the company's book, and the super might easily find some excuse to bounce you, too."

"He'd better not," scowled Sanders. "Somethin' might happen to him if he did," added the man darkly.

"Do you mean to say you'd—"

"No matter what I mean. It's no one's business but my own," snarled Sanders.

His companions looked at him askance.

They knew he would be an ugly man to have for an enemy.

In fact, he, Drake, and two or three others, who formed a clique of their own, were fully capable of resorting to desperate expedients in order to get square on anybody who injured them.

The three men, who had got leave of absence from their work to visit the superintendent, returned to their duties, and that evening reported the result of their mission to the president of the society.

Sanders met Drake, as usual, at the tavern, and told him of the superintendent's ultimatum.

Martin swore like a trooper, and said the society must be talked into taking up his case as a union matter.

"If you want to know my opinion, I don't think the society will stand by you," replied Sanders.

He then told Drake of the hobble the committee got in by intimating that the society was directly interested in his reinstatement.

"What did you want to do that for?" cried Drake angrily. "Ye've spiled my chances."

"Ain't that what you told me last night to do? What's the matter with you?"

Drake was obliged to admit that he had told Sanders to try and bulldoze the superintendent.

"We put our foot in it by followin' your orders. The su-

per flashed up in a moment and jumped on me like a ton of coal. I may get into trouble on account of it, but if I do, by the Lord Harry, the super will regret it."

Sanders brought his fist down on the table they were sitting at with a force that made the glasses jump, and drew the attention of the habitués in the place to them.

"So you think the society won't stand by me?" said Drake crustily.

"I'm afraid it won't. The super's answer is that he discharged you for cause. Kin you prove he didn't tell the truth?"

"I can't prove nothin'," growled the other.

"Well, there you are. If you can't prove nothin' the society won't do nothin'. The super says you're bounced for good. He won't take you back under any circumstances. What are you goin' to do about it?"

"Fight the matter out at the special meetin', and if I'm beaten——"

"Well?"

"I'll figure out some way to get square with the super and the company both. Are you game to help me?"

"That'll depend."

"On what?"

"How dangerous it is. I'm not goin' to cut my throat for no man."

"We can count on Hissop, Keating and Hanley takin' a hand, too. We five have sworn to stick by one another."

"What do you propose to do?"

"I shan't say a word till I find out for certain that the society won't act. If I'm thrown down then I'll call on you chaps to help me out. Understand?"

Sanders nodded, and the two men left the table and walked out into the night.

As they did so a boy's face appeared from behind a screen a couple of feet away and watched their exit from the tavern.

The face belonged to Dick Darrell, who had been visiting a sick miner who roomed on the second floor of the tavern.

He had been on his way out through the public room when he saw Drake and Sanders at the table.

Not wishing to be seen there by them, he had slipped behind the screen to wait until they went to the bar or left the place.

While behind the screen he couldn't help hearing all that passed between the two men, and the last part of their conversation rather unpleasantly impressed him.

He knew that Drake was desperate enough to do most anything if driven to the wall; and he also knew that the man's four particular associates might be counted on to back him up under certain circumstances.

As soon as Drake and Sanders left the tavern Dick came from behind the screen and walked out of the place, too.

"Looks as if Drake intended to make trouble for the company in case the society does not back him up. Mr. Murray told me to-day that he didn't think that the miners would consent to make an issue with the superintendent over the man unless he was able to show mighty good cause. Under the circumstances I think Drake and his friends will bear watching. I must tell Mr. Murray what I overheard of their talk. He may consider it wise to notify the superintendent."

Thus speaking, Dick walked home.

CHAPTER VI.

THERE IS TROUBLE TO BURN.

Next day was Sunday, and Dick went out walking in the afternoon with Myrtle.

Micky Grady also went out walking with Pansy about half an hour before.

Though neither pair was aware of the fact, they each took the same direction down the river.

"Do you suppose Packy Sanders has left the neighborhood for good?" asked Myrtle.

"I guess he has," replied Dick. "Somebody must have tipped him off to the fact that Constable Green was after him. At any rate, he didn't show up at the breaker next morning, and hasn't been seen around the village since. So the constable, who was looking for him, told me yesterday. Micky tried to pump his brother Jimmy, who works with him in the breaker screen-room, but Jimmy, who handles

the truth very carelessly, said he didn't know where Packy was."

"He might have hid aboard a coal barge that night, and went down the river next day with the fleet," said the girl.

"It is possible he might have done that, or sneaked a ride to Scranton on a coal train, or walked the railroad to Blackton. At any rate, he's made himself scarce, and the village is, in my opinion, the gainer by his absence."

By this time they had got below the long culm-heap and were approaching the stranded coal barge, which lay close to the river bank.

Then it was that Dick noticed smoke rising above the tops of a thick clump of trees not far from the barge.

"I wonder who's built that fire and what for?" he said.

"Probably some of the boys from the village," replied Myrtle.

Dick sniffed the air.

"Do you know I smell tar?" he said. "They must be burning wood coated with tar. I'm going over to take a look."

Myrtle had little curiosity about what was going on in the clump of trees, and so she seated herself on a large, flat stone to wait till Dick came back.

Darrell soon heard the hilarious shouts and laughter of several boys, and the smell of tar grew stronger.

"They appear to be having a high old time among themselves," thought Dick. "Seems to me it must be tar they're cooking. It smells mighty strong."

Dick entered the little patch of wood without any particular caution, and walked up to the edge of a small clearing.

The sight that met his gaze fairly staggered him for a moment or two.

In the center of the open space was a fire, above which, suspended in gypsy fashion to three long poles, was an old iron kettle, the contents of which Jimmy Sanders was stirring with a stick.

A disreputable-looking pillow lay on the grass near it.

Bound to a tree, within a few feet of the kettle, Dick was astonished to recognize Micky Grady.

Secured to another tree close by, with a handkerchief tied tightly about her mouth to stifle her cries, was Pansy, looking very much frightened.

Dancing in a weird way in front of Micky were Packy Sanders and two of his cronies, evidently in high glee.

"After we tar and feather yer we're goin' to ride yer on a rail," said Packy, pausing in his gyrations and addressing the prisoner.

"You're a lot of cowards," replied Micky defiantly. "Why don't you take a feller your own size?"

"Shut up," retorted Packy with an ugly look, "or I'll fill yer jaw full of melted tar! I owe yer a lickin' for callin' me a big stiff the other night. We'll let the lickin' go and give yer a tar-bath instead. When we get t'rough wit' yer you'll look like one of them ostriches I seen in a book once."

"He'll look more like the wild man of Borneo I seen last summer in a circus," said one of the other boys.

"Is the tar ready, Jimmy?" asked Packy.

"Yer have got to put the fire out and let it cool some," replied Jimmy.

"Aw, it won't burn him t'rough his clothes," said Packy.

"Open the piller, Pete. When I plaster him wit' a dab of tar you want to t'row a handful of feathers over it. We'll make him look like a bird on two feet," he added with a grin.

Packy took the stick with which his brother had been stirring the tar and tested its liquid consistency.

"That's all right," he said. "Pull the fire from under it, then we'll begin business."

Jimmy called on the fourth youth to help him, and between them they scattered the flames.

The young rascals were so taken up with the job they had in hand that they did not notice the presence of Dick Darrell in the background among the trees.

He had recovered from his surprise and was preparing to take action to rescue Pansy and Micky from the Sanders gang.

Pansy was watching the proceedings with starting eyes, quite helpless to do anything for the relief of her plucky young escort, and fearing the worst kind of treatment was going to be handed out to Micky.

Dick figured that he had no easy proposition on his hands, as Packy and his two cronies were as big and strong as he was.

Then there was Master Jimmy to be reckoned with as a side issue.

Dick saw that he must try and take the young ruffians by surprise, and in the confusion cut Micky loose.

He could then depend on Grady making things interesting for Jimmy while he endeavored to beat off the other three with the stout stick he had picked up for that purpose.

After considering the best plan to work he decided to begin with Pansy, to whom the rascals were paying no attention.

He slipped around behind her, and with his pocket-knife quietly cut the cord which held her to the tree.

As he crept away toward Micky, Pansy, finding herself free, tore the handkerchief from her mouth and let out a shrill scream that awoke the echoes of the neighborhood and startled the Sanders bunch.

"The gal's loose!" cried Packy. "Grab her, fellers, before she gets away!"

Jimmy and the other two boys started for her at once, but Pansy skipped out of the wood like a wild fawn, screaming as she went, and ran into her astonished sister's arms.

The pursuers stopped on seeing Myrtle and consulted together.

In the meantime Dick released Micky, and both attacked Packy, tripped him up and were tying his arms behind his back before he realized what was happening to him.

As he opened his mouth to yell for help, Micky stuffed a handful of earth and grass into it, sitting on Packy's chest to keep him down while Dick tied his ankles together.

"You didn't come this way any too soon, Dick," said Micky. "Packy and his gang nabbed me and Pansy while we was walkin' this way, and tied us to them trees, gaggin' Pansy so she couldn't scream for help. Then they brought that tar kettle from somewhere, rigged it up in the clearin' here, and started a fire under it. They were goin' to tar and feather me, and ride me on a rail. They'd have done it if you hadn't come up and stopped them."

"I guess they would," replied Dick, as he knotted the rope that had held Pansy about Packy's ankles. "Now get up, grab this chap by the head and help me drag him out of sight among the bushes."

They carried the helpless young rascal twenty feet away and left him, then, each with a stick in hand, they started to find out how matters stood with Pansy, whose screams had ceased suddenly, and her sister.

On the edge of the clearing they came face to face with Jimmy and the other two chaps, who had prudently concluded not to attack the two girls, but return, take revenge out of Micky, and then make themselves scarce.

It was an unpleasant surprise for the trio to find Micky free and backed up by Dick Darrell, for whose prowess they entertained considerable respect.

Dick and Micky gave them no time to consider what plan of action they should take under the circumstances, but attacked them at once, Darrell dropping his stick and using his fists.

As Dick could slug some, and Micky prodded the enemy right and left with his club, they soon had the ruffians on the run.

They followed the discomfited young rascals for perhaps a hundred feet and then rejoined the girls.

"Pansy has been telling me how Packy, his brother Jimmy, and their two friends, captured Micky and herself by coming up on them from behind," Myrtle said to Dick. "Did they really intend to cover your clothes with tar and sprinkle feathers over you, Micky?" she asked, turning to the little slate-picker.

"Bet your life they did," grinned Micky. "They were just startin' in to do it when Dick came up and cut Pansy and me loose, and then while three of them was chasin' Pansy we just piled in and done Packy up. He's lying back there in the bushes with his arms and legs bound and his mouth full of grass to keep him from hollerin'."

"Are you going to leave him there?" Myrtle asked Dick.

"No. Micky and I are going to march him to the village and hand him over to Constable Green."

"If you're goin' to do that you'd better do it right off, before his gang comes back and lets him loose," said Micky.

Dick agreed with his companion, so they went to the spot where they had left Packy, cut his ankles loose and made him get on his feet.

"Now, then, forward march!" ordered Dick sternly.

Packy favored him with a malignant glare and refused to budge.

"Won't do as you're told, eh?" said Dick. "Grab him by the arm, Micky, and make him start."

Packy struggled as well as he could and kicked Darrell in the leg.

Dick picked up a stout switch and applied it with considerable vigor to the young rascal's legs.

"Get a move on, or I'll keep this up."

Packy danced around in pain, but could make no sound.

"Let's take the tar-kettle down and make him sit in it," said Micky with a wink.

The slate-picker only made the remark as a bluff, for he knew his companion would not adopt such a strenuous measure.

It had the desired effect.

Frightened lest Dick and Micky might dump him into the tar-kettle, Packy started off toward the spot where the girls were waiting, his captors holding him by the arms so he couldn't run away.

He stopped frequently to resist, but a smart application of the switch caused him to go on again.

As soon as they were near the engine-house and breaker, Micky, by Dick's orders, took the grass out of Packy's mouth, giving him free use of his tongue.

"I'll get square with yer, see if I don't!" he snarled, glaring at Darrell.

"I don't think you will. You've got another outrage to answer for, and I guess the justice will see that you are committed to the Blackton workhouse for a year at least."

"If I go to the workhouse my old man'll fix you."

"I've got nothing to do with your father."

"He'll have somethin' to do with you."

"If he touches me he'll get in trouble himself."

"Yah! Yer only t'ink he will."

At that moment Martin Drake made his appearance from behind the breaker-house.

"Hello!" he said. "What you tied up that way for, Packy?"

"Cut me loose and kick the stuffin' out'r these fellers!" cried Packy, struggling to get away from Dick and Micky.

"Let him go!" said Drake, advancing to the relief of his pal's son.

"He's wanted by Constable Green," replied Dick doggedly, resolved not to release Packy if he could avoid doing so.

"He's a liar!" retorted the young ruffian. "I ain't wanted by nobody."

"He, his brother Jimmy and two other boys attacked Pansy Blossom and Micky here a while ago a mile down the river. They were about to tar and feather Grady when I interfered and saved him. I'm going to see that he's sent to the lock-up for it."

"You ain't goin' to let me be took to no lock-up, are yer, Martin?" asked Packy.

"I should say not. You're Bill's son, and I reckon it's my duty to stand up for you."

"You've no right to chip in, Martin Drake," protested Dick.

"I'll make it my right, then," grinned the miner in an ugly way.

"I'll report you to the justice if you let him loose."

"You'll do what, you young whelp?" roared Drake, advancing menacingly on Dick, who stood his ground.

"I'll report you to Mr. Robinson. There is a warrant out for Packy's arrest. You'll get into trouble if you help him get away."

"I reckon after I git through with you there won't be enough of you left to report me or anybody else," cried Drake, beginning to roll up his sleeves.

The two girls had stood aloof during the foregoing, watching the outcome with some apprehension.

As the miner showed he intended to attack Darrell, Myrtle rushed between the two.

"Don't you dare hit Dick!" she cried with flashing eyes and heaving bosom. "If you do I'll have you arrested."

"Ho! ho! ho!" chuckled Drake. "So you think you kin prevent me touchin' him, gal? Just you stand out'r my way or mebbe you'll git hurt yourself."

"You're a coward!" she exclaimed. "A big, strong miner like you laying your hands on a boy," she added scornfully. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"Shut up, you vixen!" roared Drake, seizing and swinging her aside.

That was more than Dick could stand.

He raised the switch he carried and brought it full across the miner's face.

The man uttered a terrible howl.

Almost blinded for the moment, he made a desperate rush at the boy, swinging his powerful fist in the air.

Dick sprang nimbly aside and the blow took effect on Packy's head, knocking him senseless.

At that moment there was the sound of wheels in the road, and Constable Green drove up in his light wagon, which he stopped on seeing the rumpus before him.

CHAPTER VII.

PACKY AND THE GANG GET WHAT'S COMING TO THEM.

Constable Green sprang out of his wagon, ran over and grabbed Drake by the arm.

The miner, furious with pain and wrath against his young aggressor, shook himself free and tried to get at Dick.

Darrell easily avoided him, for the fellow could hardly see.

"Hold on, Martin Drake," said the constable sternly. "Why are you attacking Dick Darrell?"

"I'll kill him! He struck me with a stick in the face. He 'most blinded me."

"Well, I won't allow you to hit the boy. A blow from your fist would probably injure him badly. I saw you hit Packy Sanders, and you've knocked him out."

"Me hit Packy!" cried Drake. "What would I do that for?"

"I don't know what you did it for, but I saw you knock him down as I drove up."

"I didn't do nothin' of the kind," said the miner, evidently surprised at being charged with hitting his crony's son.

"I'm not going to argue the matter with you. There's the boy unconscious on the ground. His arms are tied, too. Do you know what the meaning of all this is, Dick?" asked the rather astonished officer.

"Yes, sir. Micky Grady and I captured Packy about a mile down the river and we were carrying him to your house, knowing that you wanted him, when Martin Drake interfered and wanted to set him free. When I objected to his butting in he started to attack me. Miss Blossom stepped between us. Drake grabbed her and swung her roughly aside. I got mad at that and struck him with this switch in the face. He then rushed at me and trying to hit me smashed Packy in the head instead. That is the whole thing."

Drake heard Dick's explanation, and woke up to the fact that he had hit Packy by mistake.

"Just you wait till I ketch you by yourself," he said, nodding darkly at Darrell. "I won't leave a whole bone in your body, you young monkey!"

"Look here, my man," said the constable sternly, "no threats against this boy. You had no right to interfere with him and Packy. I've got a warrant for the young rascal's arrest, and Dick knows it. Had you set him at liberty you would have had to reckon with me and the justice."

"I told him you were looking for Packy with a warrant," said Darrell.

"You'd better go your way, Drake," advised the officer. "If I hear about you attacking Dick Darrell at any time it won't be well for you."

Constable Green, who was a powerful man, released Drake and pushed him away.

The miner glared sullenly at Dick, and then walked slowly off.

"Here, Dick," said the constable, "help me put this young ruffian into my wagon. I'll take him straight to the lock-up."

"We've got another charge to make against him," said Darrell.

"What is it?" asked the officer.

Dick explained the tar-and-feathering incident, and his statement was, of course, corroborated by Micky and Pansy.

"His brother Jimmy is getting to be as bad as he is. I'll have to take him and the other two chaps into custody, if I can lay my hands on them," said the constable.

Darrell assisted Constable Green to lift the unconscious Packy into his wagon, then the officer drove on toward the village and the two boys and their girl companions followed lamely.

Next morning Packy was brought before Justice Robinson.

Dick and Pansy were present to repeat their story of the incident on top of the culm-heap which ended in the girl falling into the river.

There was a crowd, chiefly women, present, and among them the prisoner's mother.

Mrs. Sanders favored both Dick and Pansy with vindictive looks as they each told their story.

She was about as tough as her husband, and was the terror of her neighbors.

When the justice asked Packy what he had to say, and he hung his head, his mother came forward and declared that he was a good boy, only a little wild.

"Sure, he was only playin' wid the gal, your honor," she protested. "Isn't that so, Packy?"

"Yes," replied the boy. "I didn't mean not'in'."

"There," cried the woman triumphantly. "Ye niver threw her in the river, did ye, Packy?"

"Naw. She fell in herself."

"Yer honor will let him go now," she said, as if there couldn't be any doubt of that.

Justice Robinson shook his head.

"Madam, this is only one of many complaints I've had against your son. If he wasn't guilty why did he run away as soon as he heard that Constable Green wanted him?"

"Sure, he didn't run away, your honor. It was me thot sint him to Blackton on a matter of business. Didn't I Packy?"

"Yes," answered the prisoner.

"I called twice at this woman's house after the boy," said the constable, rising, "and both times his mother told me that she didn't know where he was."

"What have you to say to that, Mrs. Sanders?" asked the justice.

"Sure, I didn't think it was any business of the constable to ask where me b'y was. If I sint him to Blackton thot was me own business, not his."

"You may sit down, Mrs. Sanders. We have another complaint against your son dating from yesterday, and your other son, Jimmy, is also implicated."

"Me son Jimmy, is it? Wot's he done? Shure, he's only a babby."

Micky Grady, who was also present, was called to the witness chair and he detailed the tar-and-feathering outrage they would have played upon him on the previous afternoon but for the opportune arrival on the scene of Darrell.

His testimony was corroborated in whole by Pansy and in part by Dick.

"You ought to see that your son Packy is a thoroughly bad boy, Mrs. Sanders. Can you find any excuse for such conduct as that of gagging and tying an inoffensive little girl to a tree, and then preparing to cover the clothing of a thirteen-year-old boy with boiling tar which would have penetrated to his skin and burnt him seriously?"

"Sure, I don't belave me Packy intinded to do it," replied Mrs. Sanders. "Did you, Packy?"

"Naw. We was only jest foolin'."

"I tould yer he didn't mane nothin'," said the woman.

"The evidence shows that he did mean it. It's about time the young man was put where he will not have an opportunity to play such vicious tricks for some time to come. I will, therefore, commit him to the Blackton workhouse for the period of one year."

Packy scowled at the justice and then at Dick, Micky and Pansy, while his mother proceeded to make a scene.

Constable Green seized the angry woman by the arm and bundled her out of the office into the street.

Jimmy and Packy's two associates were then brought into the room by the constable's assistant.

The result of their examination was that Jimmy was sentenced to a week's confinement in the lock-up, and the other two were sent to the workhouse at Blackton for three months.

That ended the proceedings before the justice, and Dick, Micky, Pansy, and the spectators went their different ways, while the prisoners were removed to the lock-up.

CHAPTER VIII.

TROUBLE AHEAD.

The special meeting to consider Martin Drake's case was called for Monday night.

During the afternoon Dick found an opportunity to tell Murray, the engineer, what he had overheard Drake say to Bill Sanders at the tavern on Saturday night.

"I can't say that I'm much surprised, Dick," replied Murray. "Drake is a hard character, and Bill Sanders isn't much better. As for Hissop, Keating and Haley, they're all birds of a feather. You say Drake told Sanders that he couldn't prove anything in his own behalf."

"Yes," answered Dick.

"I take that as a practical admission that his cause is a bad one. That being the case he will receive no support to-night from the society."

"Then the company and the superintendent may look for trouble if Drake can persuade Sanders and the others to go into some scheme with him."

"You think he meant what he said?"

"He spoke as if he did."

"Did he drop any hint of what scheme he had in view?"

"No. Sanders asked him about it, but he said he wouldn't make a move until after the meeting. If the society threw him down then there would be something doing."

"I think the matter looks serious enough for you to call at the superintendent's office and acquaint him with what you overheard," said the engineer.

"Shall I go now? Mr. Taylor leaves his office about half-past four, and sometimes earlier," said Dick.

"No. Wait till to-morrow. Let the society act first. As the vote will probably be against Drake he may betray himself to some extent in his anger. I will watch him closely during the evening, and after what you have told me I may be able to form an idea if he contemplates mischief on his own hook," said Murray.

There was a full house at the rooms of the Keystone Branch that evening, as all the miners were anxious to learn whether the society was likely to be drawn into an issue with the company.

Although Martin Drake was popular in a way with a large number of the members, because they liked to hear him speak against trusts, monopolies, and other industrial evils, as they reckoned them, still his ugly reputation had weakened his influence among the most steady and conservative miners.

They distrusted him as a man, much as they admired his oratorical ability, and were impressed by his plausible reasoning and logic.

The committee that had waited on the superintendent presented its report.

This put the case squarely up to Drake.

He got up and made a speech in his own behalf, in which he exhausted every argument he could think of.

His cronies followed, and strongly urged the society to make common cause with Drake.

Then the sober and disinterested members came to the fore and said that they failed to see one good reason why the society should get into hot water over Drake, as it seemed evident he had been discharged for cause, which took the matter entirely out of the hands of the union.

The question was finally put to a vote, and Drake lost by a large margin.

He sprang to his feet in a rage.

"I consider it an outrage to be turned down in this way after all the money I've paid into the society for protection. You don't see in my line of trouble like they say even the rats desert a sinkin' ship. All right, since I can't get justice through my own society I'll see whether I can get it some other way," he said significantly. "I was not built to crawl around on my knees and kiss the hand of a bloated task-master, let me tell you that. Those who choose to humble themselves in order to keep in the good graces of the super can do it. Taylor and his company will find out before they are many hours older that they made a mistake in refusing to take me back to work. That's all I've got to say."

His words created something of a sensation.

The members wondered what he meant by saying that since he couldn't get justice from the society he'd try and get it some other way.

Somebody moved that the meeting be adjourned, and in the confusion that ensued Drake and several of his closest friends disappeared.

Next day Martin Drake's family packed their possessions into a two-horse wagon and left the village, their destination presumably being Blackton.

Drake himself left the key of the cottage at the company's office with word that he gave up possession voluntarily.

Dick would have had an interview with the superintendent about Drake's veiled threat at the meeting the night before,

together with the conversation he had heard in the saloon Saturday night, but Mr. Taylor was away all day in Wilkes-Barre.

When Murray learned that Drake had given up the cottage and moved his family out of the village, he came to the conclusion that the man had decided not to involve himself in any desperate act against the company for fear of the probable consequences, and so he told Dick that he needn't call on the superintendent.

Sanders had been in a particularly ugly mood since Monday night, when he learned that his eldest son had been sent to the Blackton warehouse for one year, and his youngest to the village jail for a week.

He blamed their hard luck on Dick Darrell and Micky Grady, and registered a threat against them both.

He did not take the trouble to hunt up either of the boys to visit his anger on them, but solaced himself by putting in more time at the tavern, where he, Hissop, Haley and Keating met every night and talked and drank at a table apart from the rest of the habitués of the place.

Dick, who visited the sick miner again that week, saw them with their heads together, and wondered what they were talking about.

The boy had his suspicions that there was something in the wind, but he was unable to catch a word they said, so he had no means of finding out whether their conversation was innocent or otherwise.

Sunday came around again, offering Dick and Myrtle another opportunity to walk out together in broad daylight.

This time Micky and Pansy accompanied them at a short distance behind, though, now that Packy and his associates were being taken care of, they had no fear of walking into trouble.

After supper Dick started for the outskirts of the village to visit one of his former associates who was still looking after coal cars in the mine.

He spent a couple of hours with his friend and then left for home.

He was walking along a retired and little frequented footpath, within a few hundred yards of the Keystone Coal Mining Company's office and other buildings used by the corporation, when he heard voices behind him.

It was a calm, dark night, and the sounds came very clearly to his ears.

The men who were talking were walking the same path behind him, and were likely to overtake him unless he walked faster.

This was a matter that would not have concerned him but for one thing—the voice of one of the men sounded strangely like that of Martin Drake, and Drake was not supposed to be in the neighborhood any more.

Drake had a clear, bell-like voice, different from the tones of any other miner of that village, and that fact had given him great advantage as a public speaker.

"If that isn't Drake's voice," muttered Dick, "then some stranger has come to the village who talks just like him. If it is Drake I wonder what he's doing here after severing his connection with the place?"

He soon heard Drake called by name, and that settled the question of his identity.

Dick had little difficulty in recognizing the man who spoke to him by his voice.

It was Bill Sanders.

Darrell had no desire to meet either Sanders or Drake in that out-of-the-way spot at that time of night.

He judged that it wouldn't be healthy for him.

There were at least two other men with them, and the boy was at no loss to surmise who the other two were, for it was sure to be Hissop and Keating, or Haley.

Dick was about to step out briskly, for the purpose of leaving the men as far behind as possible, when a flash flashed through his brain that the presence of Drake was rather significant of trouble.

"I guess it's my duty to try and find out if these fellows are up to mischief," he thought. "I'll just drop into that shed yonder, wait till they pass and then follow them. It's my opinion that Drake's threat was no idle one after all. He and his pals may be making up some plan to strike the company. If they are I think it's up to me to look after the company's interests. That's what I would expect of an honest employee if I was the owner of this property."

The men's voices were gruff and aggressive, and the topic under discussion seemed to be no common one.

As the men came closer Dick heard their words with some distinctness, and the purport of the talk was clearly aimed

against the company, although he lost too many of the words to be able to understand just what they were talking about.

Darrell had to leave the path to reach the shed, and the men were close behind him when he did so.

As he crouched down in the open doorway watching for them to go by he was a bit disconcerted to see four figures emerge from the gloom and make straight for the shed, too.

They came to a stop a yard from the door and stood gesticulating and talking earnestly together in a much lower tone.

"As it's early yet, and we don't want to be seen by the watchman, or anybody else, for that matter, we'd better finish our talk in this shed," said Drake.

Dick had only time to shrink back in a corner of the place before the men entered the shed.

CHAPTER IX.

THE UNSEEN WATCHER.

"What time will Keating join us?" asked Martin Drake.

"As soon as he kin get away from his house," replied Sanders. "I told you his wife is sick."

"Where did you tell him to meet us?"

"I told him to come to this shed; that we'd wait here for him."

"Well, we've got some hours ahead of us yet. He agreed to take a hand in our scheme, did he? Haley, you say, is laid up with a bad foot, and is out of it?"

"Yes. He mashed his toes in the tunnel yesterday, and won't be able to get about for a week or two."

"That will leave four of us to watch while Jobson cracks the safe, and that's enough. I counted on five, but with Haley out of the divvy will be so much more."

"Are you sure you kin get at the money?" asked Sanders. "It's in the safe, you know."

"You leave that part of the business to my friend Jobson. I didn't bring him over here to look on. He's a cracksman of the first water. He can go through a safe such as they have in the office like it was a piece of cheese. He's got the tools to operate with in that there bag. As there's two weeks' pay for the men lyin' in that safe, which is a pretty tidy sum of money, we ought to make a good haul, the five of us. Suspicion can't fall on you, Hissop or Keatin' unless you git to spendin' your coin too freely, which you wouldn't be fool enough to do. As for Jobson and me, we'll be safe enough, don't you fear. This is where I combine revenge with a year's wages or more, and you chaps will be mighty well paid for a few hours' risk, which really amounts to nothin', since Hissop has got the watchman as drunk as blue blazes."

"You can bet he's loaded," laughed Hissop. "He's been guzzlin' all afternoon with me. He's as muddle-headed as a fool by this time."

"There, you see we'll have things all our own way. As soon as Jobson gets the safe open and the money out we'll come back here, divide the swag, and scatter. It's just like crackin' money. Nobody'll ever tumble to how the thing happened. It will be one of them mysteries the papers are all the time printin'. The company kin stand the loss easily, and we'll be so much ahead."

While the men were talking Dick had crept inch by inch over to the opposite corner of the shed where an old box stood, behind which there was a vacant space that offered concealment for one person.

As he coiled up in there one of his shoes struck the end of the box.

Sanders heard the slight noise and exclaimed:

"What's that?"

"What are you talkin' about?" asked Drake.

"I heard a noise at the back of this shed."

"Inside or outside?"

"I ain't sure which."

"Go outside, Hissop, and take a squint around."

Drake then struck a match and looked around the place.

He looked into the empty box, and was flashing the match behind it when it expired in his fingers.

Dick, crouching down as low as he could, had given himself up as a gone goose.

Drake caught a partial glimpse of the space behind the box as the match went out, and seeing nothing suspicious, did not look further.

"There's no one in here," he said, rejoining his companions.

"It's a mighty good thing there isn't," replied Sanders in a significant tone. "It wouldn't be well for anybody to be caught here."

"That's right," nodded Drake. "If we caught a spy here he'd never live to give us away."

"I'm glad there wasn't any one," said Jobson, "for I'm ag'in sheddin' blood. I don't want to get my neck in a halter for the sake of a few thousand dollars."

Here Hissop re-entered the shed.

"There ain't nobody outside," he said.

"You must have imagined you heard a noise," said Drake to Sanders.

"Mebbe I did. Or p'haps it was a rat."

Dick congratulated himself on having escaped detection.

He judged from Drake's remarks that it would be as much as his life was worth to be caught spying on these men.

A light flashed up in the shed several times, and Dick guessed that one of the rascals was lighting his pipe.

He was sure of it a moment later when the smell of tobacco-smoke was borne to his nostrils.

"Hist!" exclaimed Hissop at this point. "There's a couple of men comin' down the path. Lie low."

A dead silence succeeded his words.

Dick heard the voices of two men, evidently miners, passing along the path a few yards in front of the shed.

If they looked in the direction of the shed they saw nothing to indicate that any one was in there, and so they passed on their way, and their voices finally died out in the distance.

The four men then resumed their talk, but it was on subjects not connected with the project on hand, and did not at all interest Dick.

Another half hour passed away and Drake began to show signs of impatience.

"It's about time Keating showed up," he growled, peering out into the gloom.

"He'll be along presently," said Sanders.

"Are you sure we can depend on him?" asked Drake.

"Why not? You ought to know Keating as well as I do. He's hot after a share of the stakes, and he's willin' to take considerable chance to get the money."

Ten minutes more passed and then Hissop, who was watching by the door, called for silence again.

"I hear footsteps along the path," he said. "Mebbe that is Keating now."

The footsteps stopped and a low, cautious whistle broke the silence of the night.

"That's him," said Sanders. "Go out and meet him, Hissop."

Hissop left the shed and in a few minutes returned with the fifth member of the party—the expected Keating.

"Hello, Keat! You've got here at last," said Drake. "We've been waitin' an hour for you."

"What's the diff! It ain't time yet for business. Not over half-past ten."

"Well, we wanted you here, so we'd be all together. How's your old woman?"

"She's better."

"Then there's nothin' to take your mind off the job?"

"Not a thing."

"Now that we're all here we'll go into the final details, and then we'll be ready to get busy."

"Say, fellers," said the new arrival, "I've been thinkin' it wouldn't be half a bad idea if we could throw suspicion on some chap who's known to be a bit disgruntled with the company."

"That's all right," replied Drake; "but who's to be the victim, and how are goin' to implicate him?"

"There's one man right and proper who would fill the bill."

"Who is he?"

"Who? Can't you guess?"

"No, blame me if I can," replied Drake impatiently.

"Why, that old snot, Ben Blossom," said Keating.

"Ben Blossom!" exclaimed Drake, Sanders and Hissop in a breath.

Dick's heart gave a bound against his ribs.

Ben Blossom was the father of Myrtle and Pansy.

He was an inoffensive old man, who had gone to the dogs since his wife's death, three years since.

While Mrs. Blossom was alive Ben was a sober and steady miner, and stood high in the company's books; but when his wife died of quick pneumonia he went all to pieces, like a stranded ship on a lee shore.

He took to drink, and became so unreliable that he was finally laid off from work.

He was told that if he would pull himself together and be a man again he would be reinstated, but he never took advantage of the offer.

His children were allowed to keep the cottage at a reduced rent, which Dick helped to pay by going there to live.

Although Ben Blossom had no grouch against the company, lately his mind, weakened by drink, had become subject to hallucinations, and he imagined that the company was hounding him out of the village.

He began swearing that he would do something to get square.

Nobody paid any attention to his vaporings, not even the superintendent, when his remarks were reported at the office.

That evening, while watching beside his wife, Keating had suddenly thought of Ben Blossom's idle threats, and it occurred to him that they might be turned to the advantage of himself and his rascally associates in connection with the scoundrelly job they contemplated putting into execution that night.

He knew that Blossom on Sunday evenings went to the cottage of an old mate.

As soon as he got away from attendance on his wife, Keating started off to waylay the old man on his road home.

Keating had a flask of whisky with him, and as soon as Blossom came along the rascal hooked arms with him and offered him the bottle, telling him to drink heartily.

Blossom didn't require a second invitation, and between drinking and talking Keating decoyed him to a bunch of bushes and kept him there till the old chap finished most of the bottle and rolled over in a drunken sleep.

Keating then took his jacket from him and came right on to the shed where he expected to meet his associates.

"Yes, Ben Blossom," repeated Keating, as the others looked at him. "Here's his jacket. I left him as drunk as a loon in a bunch of bushes not so far from here. We'll place his jacket so it's sure to be found after the explosion. As he's not likely to be home to-night, that of itself will look suspicious. When he's questioned about his movements since leavin' his pal's cottage he won't be able to give an intelligent answer, for he won't know himself where he went or what he did. Now, when things are in the flurry and excitement that'll come after this business, folks ain't goin' to be too dainty about their suspicions. The jacket will be first-class evidence that Blossom was around the office and other buildin's to-night. Whether anythin' comes of it or not, things will look kind of black ag'in him, considerin' the way he's lately been shootin' off his mouth."

Drake and the others listened attentively to Keating's scheme for involving the unfortunate Ben Blossom in the crime they were about to commit.

"It will be just the thing," said Sanders. "I owe him a grudge anyway 'cause that young gal of his, Pansy, got my son Packy sent to the Blackton works for a year, and helped to put Jimmy in the lock-up for a week."

"It isn't such a bad plan for takin' suspicion away from us," admitted Drake. "I don't reckon that anythin' will be done to Blossom, as there won't be no direct evidence ag'in him; still he may get into a tight box at first, but that ain't nothin' to us."

"Of course it isn't," said Sanders. "It might do him good to be sent to prison for a few years. He wouldn't get his booze then like he does now."

Dick was boiling over with indignation at the heartlessness of the trick to implicate poor old Ben Blossom in the robbery under way, but consoled himself with the reflection that he would put a spoke in the rascals' plans as soon as he could get away from the shed.

By the time the men had arranged the last details of their crooked work, Jobson, who sported a watch, announced that it was a quarter past eleven.

"Come on, then," said Drake. "No use wastin' any more time."

He stepped out of the shed and started for the scene of the contemplated crime, followed by the others.

CHAPTER X.

THE DISCOVERY OF DICK AND WHAT FOLLOWED.

When Martin Drake and his pals left the shed Dick came from his place of concealment and followed them cautiously.

It was a dark night, as we have said, and the boy found some difficulty keeping them in sight, as he did not think it advisable to follow too close behind them.

However, he knew they were bound for the company's office, which was not far from the shed in the direction of the village.

As he crept along Dick was figuring on the best course to pursue in order to secure the capture of the five rascals before they were able to carry out their plans for looting the office safe.

"Drake was pretty clever to enlist the services of a professional crook," he muttered, "since it would be impossible for them to break open the safe. It not only requires a skilled hand at the business but proper tools to carry out such a job. The miners figure that they'll never be suspected of having any connection with the work, as they couldn't possibly do such a thing without experienced help. It's lucky for the company that I discovered the scheme and who are at the bottom of it. It's about a mile from the office to Constable Green's house. As soon as I see that the crook has got into the building I'll run into the village and notify the constable about what's going on. It ought to give the constable plenty of time to gather a posse, come out here and nab the whole bunch."

Having decided on his course of action, Dick followed the five men to their destination.

Hiding behind a coal car drawn up on the track, Dick watched the movements of the rascals.

He saw them come to a stop not far from the office building and hold a brief consultation, then the four miners separated and started to hunt up the night watchman, who was supposed to be as drunk as a boiled owl.

At least Dick presumed that was their object, as well as to make sure that no one was around to discover what they were about.

Jobson sat down on a boulder and waited, with his bag of tools in his hand.

Dick waited patiently for the miners to return.

In about ten minutes Sanders reappeared and walked over to where the crook was sitting.

Apparently the miner advised him that the coast was clear, for he started for the front door of the office.

It didn't take him but a moment or two to force the door, enter the building and close the door behind him.

"The game is on," thought Dick; "now to carry the news to the constable."

He left the shelter of the car and started for the hedge under cover of which he expected to elude observation in case one of the rascally miners should happen to be looking in that direction at the moment.

While he judged that the four miners were scouting around on the watch against an intruder, he did not suspect that one of them had crossed the tracks and taken up his post in the midst of the hedge.

But this was exactly what Drake had done.

He found that he could get a fine view of the approaches to the office from that spot, and at the same time keep out of sight himself.

His sharp eyes detected Dick the moment he left the shadow of the coal car.

"Who in thunder is that?" he muttered. "It's a spy or I don't know what I'm talkin' about. Well, I'll just cook his goose for him. I see he's comin' this way. Good! 'Walk into my parlor,' said the spider to the fly," he grinned.

Not suspecting that his presence had been discovered by one of the rascals, Dick reached the hedge, pushed his way into it and started to creep along behind it so that he could pass the office building without, as he hoped, being seen.

Drake was waiting for him to get near enough to pounce on.

"I'll fix the skunk, whoever he is," the miner snarled to himself. "Seems to be a boy. What in the mischief is he doin' around here at this hour of the night? Up to a lot of crooked work himself, maybe. Well, if he's been hidin' any time behind that car he's got onto us, and it won't do to let him get away."

At that moment Dick got within reach of the spot where Drake was hidden.

The rascal rose up like a shadow and aimed a terrible blow at the boy's head.

Had it taken effect as intended it might have killed Dick, for the miner's fist was like a sledge-hammer, but, luckily for Dick, he stumbled over some creepers at the moment and went down on all-fours.

The blow spent its force in the air, and Drake, losing his balance, fell over him.

Dick was staggered for an instant by the presence of the rascal, but quickly got on his legs and started to run.

Drake, however, reached out and caught him by one of his ankles, and down went Dick again.

He tried to kick himself loose, but Drake couldn't be shaken off.

"Come here, you young varmint!" cried the miner, dragging Darrell toward him. "What are you doin' around here, eh?"

"What's that to you?" asked Dick boldly.

"You'll find it's a whole lot to me. Come, now, who are you? Speak up, or I'll smash you in the face."

Dick saw that Drake, whom he recognized by his voice, was bound to discover his identity in a few moments whether he answered the question or not, so he said:

"I'm Dick Darrell, if you want to know very bad."

"Dick Darrell!" roared Drake, who, since the time the boy struck him in the face with the switch near the breaker-house, when the miner tried to set Packy Sanders free, had it in good and hard for the engineer's assistant. "So it's you, you young monkey, eh? I've a big bone to pick with you, and I guess I'll pick it now as well as any other time. You nearly blinded me the other mornin', you young villain, and I swore to git square with you for it. Before I fix you I want to know what you've been spyin' on. I fancy you know too much, anyway, for your own good. Get on your feet, blame you!" and Drake yanked him up.

Dick refused to gratify the miner's curiosity as to the reason why he was about that locality at a moment when his presence was particularly undesirable.

"So you won't speak? I'll see whether I kin make you speak or not," he said with grim ferociousness.

Holding on to Dick with one hand, he searched around for a stick to whale him with, but he failed to find anything suitable for his purpose.

Drake then decided to drag the boy across the tracks and see what he could find on the other side.

He did so, and was met by Hissop.

"Who have you there?" asked the other miner.

"A young spy," gritted Drake. "Dick Darrell, who helps Murray at the engine-house. I caught him watchin' behind that car yonder, so I reckon he's too wise to be allowed to go free."

"Why did you bring him here? Why didn't you knock him out with a chunk of coal? He's identified you, and me, too, for that matter. That makes a pretty kettle of fish. No matter what we may do to him, he'll blow the gaff on us to-morrow mornin' when the job has been discovered."

"He'll blow no gaff!" hissed Drake. "I'll kill him first!"

"No," replied Hissop, "there's to be no blood spillin'. I'm not goin' to put a noose around my neck for the sake of a few hundred dollars."

"That's so?" sneered Drake. "If he ain't put out of the way how are we goin' to save ourselves from bein' took up for the robbery, eh? Answer me that, Tom Hissop."

The other rascal saw that they were in a bad quandary.

The two, with Dick between them, were standing near the office building.

Just then a heavy, dull report reached their ears from inside the office.

Both knew what that meant—that Jobson had blown open the safe.

Dick also knew the meaning of the sound.

With a sudden lunge he wrenched his arm out of Drake's grip and fled away into the darkness.

"After him!" roared Drake.

Dick didn't get far before he was headed off by Sanders and partly surrounded by the three rascals it was a case of dodge this way and that to escape them.

The noise made by the efforts of the miners to catch Dick brought Keating on the scene, and Dick found himself in a tight fix.

At that moment Jobson came out of the doorway of the office with the money-box in his hand.

He instantly divined from the excitement that something had happened.

Seeing that his associates in guilt were busily engaged trying to capture some intruder, his sharp mind suggested that here was a chance for himself that ought not to be neglected.

He had the money-box containing two weeks' pay of the company's employees in his hands. Why not sneak off with it in the confusion and darkness, and let his pals whistle for their share?

The principle of honor among thieves was not very strongly developed in Jobson's character.

He went rather on the idea of every one for himself and the Old Boy for all.

The crooks didn't dwell long over his decision.

He sneaked around the opposite side of the building, and disappeared into the gloom of the night.

CHAPTER XI.

'DICK ELUDES HIS ENEMIES.

In the meantime Dick, finding himself in a trap, saw that his only chance was in assuming an aggressive attitude.

This thought was put in his head by seeing a pile of coal close by.

He judged that he might look for little mercy at the hands of the rascals if they got him into their clutches again.

He suddenly stopped near the coal-heap, snatched up several pieces and began throwing them at the rascals in quick succession.

His aim was pretty accurate, and the four rascals had a lively time trying to avoid the hard missiles.

Drake received two nasty cuts in the face, while Sanders suffered from a similar cut over the ear that made them both wary for the time being of coming in closer contact with the nerry boy.

"Blame you, Darrell!" cried Drake at length, furious over the wounds he had received. "We'll fix you in a minute or two."

Dick's answer was a lump of coal that caught the rascal over the eye and drew more blood.

That was the last straw with the miner.

With a roar like a mad bull, and bending down his head, he dashed straight at the boy, determined to bring matters to an issue.

Dick saw that he meant business, and taking advantage of the opening in the circle of his enemies, he darted through in a direction away from the village.

The four gave instant chase, but Dick outstripped them and disappeared in the darkness.

After a fruitless pursuit the rascals stopped and came together to consult.

"This is a fine hole we're in now, Drake," snarled Keating. "The boy will give us away as sure as thunder, and we'll be pulled in the mornin'."

"What's the use of howlin' over spilled milk?" growled Drake. "Who expected that we'd be up ag'in that kid?"

"Blast the luck!" gritted Hissop. "We'll have to skip from the village as soon as we've divided the swag. What's my family to do without me?"

"And who's goin' to look after my sick wife and two kids?" roared Keating. "I wish I'd never gone into your blamed scheme, Martin Drake."

"Stop your yawpin' and listen to me. All isn't lost yet. I know what that boy'll do. He'll make straight for Constable Green's house, wake the old man up and tell his story. Well, he must be headed off."

"How kin he be headed off now?" asked Hissop.

"Easily. We chased him away from the village. He'll have to work around some distance to get there. You and Keatin' must start direct for the constable's. You know where he lives. You kin hustle straight there and beat the boy by a mile. Then lie in wait for him. As soon as he shows up put him out of business. If you're too squeamish to do the trick out and out, tap him on the head to make him quiet and then bring him back with you to the hut where me, Sanders and Jobson'll be waitin' for you. Now, foot, for you ain't got no time to spare."

The others thought Drake's suggestion good, and the best thing that could be done under the circumstances.

Accordingly, Hissop and Keating started for the village at

a rapid pace, making for the house occupied by Constable Green, where the rascals expected the boy would go first in order to put the machinery of the law on their track.

Drake and Sanders hurried back to the office, under the impression that Jobson had got into the safe by that time and was waiting for them with the money-box.

On entering the office they found that the crook had finished his work in good shape, for the safe door had been blown open and the money-box was missing.

Jobson was also missing, too, and though they looked all around for him he was not to be found.

"Where in thunder is he?" asked Sanders with an imprecation.

"Blest if I can tell you," replied Drake, scratching his head. "He ought to have waited here for us. I guess he must have gone over to the shed where we arranged to divide the swag."

"Then come over to the shed at once. I want to see the color of that money."

So they went to the shed at once.

It was silent and deserted, just as they had left it.

There wasn't a sign of Jobson.

Then the two rascals looked at each other, with rage and fear forming in their minds, for the same thought had suddenly occurred to each.

"Do you s'pose he's taken advantage of the chance to skip with the money?" demanded Sanders with an imprecation.

"I should hope not," replied Drake, a bit doubtfully, for he recognized that a box containing two weeks' pay of the miners was a strong temptation to a professional law-breaker.

"You should hope not!" roared Sanders. "You brought that man here and we hold you responsible for him, d'ye understand!" he added in a furious tone. "Suppose he's dusted with the boodle, where do we come in, eh? What do we get for all the risk we've run to-night? And how are we to know that this is not a put-up job between him and you to bag the money between yourselves and leave us to whistle for our shares? Answer me that, Martin Drake."

"A put-up job," snarled the other rascal. "You ought to know me better than to suspect me of such a thing."

"You can't know what's in a man till he's found out," retorted Sanders. "You've moved out of the village, bag and baggage. You say you're livin' in Blackton. How do we know yer are? The moment we lost sight of yer we may never see yer ag'in. You could meet this pal of yours, divvy up the money between yer two selves and then skip out to parts unknown. The more I look at this thing the more I fancy you've been intendin' to act crooked all along. Why ain't yer pal here with the box?"

"I don't know why he isn't here. He ought——"

"Ought be jiggered!" cried Sanders, who had worked himself into a furious pitch of temper. "I say yer intend to play us false."

"And I say you're a liar, Bill Sanders!" angrily.

The word had scarcely passed his mouth before Sanders sprang at him like a tiger, and in a moment the two men were engaged in a desperate fight.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CAPTURE OF DICK DARRELL AND HIS ESCAPE.

As soon as Dick had eluded his pursuers he started to reach the village by making a wide detour.

Drake had made no mistake in judging that the boy's objective point would be Constable Green's house.

That was just where he intended to go.

He meant to arouse the officer and make him wise to the state of affairs.

He hurried along as fast as he could go, but as he had twice as far to go as Hissop and Keating had to intercept him, they reached the vicinity of the constable's home a few minutes before Dick was in sight.

"Here he comes now," said Hissop, nodding his companion. "We made no mistake in catchin' him. Drake is a pretty wise old owl. We must knock him out with a blow and then carry him back to the shed. We've got to be careful that he doesn't make any outcry, for that might spoil everything."

"That's right," nodded Keating. "Our safety depends on nollin' but the fact of the catch. It's mighty lucky for us that we're pretty sure of catchin' him at last. I wonder how in

thunder he came to get on to us at the office? He ought to have been home in bed hours ago. I wouldn't be surprised if he was hangin' around the shed when we were there tryin' to find out what we were up to."

"By jingo! You may be right about that. Sanders heard a noise at the back of the shed before you came and I went out to investigate. I didn't see any one, but Darrell could have been lying in the bushes, and I wouldn't have seen him because it is so dark."

"You kin depend on it he's been spyin' on us for some time, the blamed young imp! Well, we'll pickle him in a minute or two."

Dick came on without the least suspicion that the two rascals were lying in wait ready to pounce upon him.

As he passed close to a big shade tree near the constable's house, Hissop and Keating sprang upon him and bore him to the ground.

Hissop struck him a heavy blow on the head with his powerful fist and Dick's wits went wool-gathering.

Perceiving that the boy lay quite still, they looked at him to make sure that he wasn't shamming.

"He's as safe as a trivet," said Keating. "That fist of yours settled him for a while. Now we'll carry him back to the shed."

Keating took hold of his head and shoulders, and Hissop grabbed up his legs.

In this way they retraced their steps to the rendezvous.

When they arrived at the shed they were surprised to see no signs of their associates in guilt.

"They must be inside waitin' for us," said Keating.

Just then Hissop, who was in advance, stumbled over something soft and yielding.

"What the dickens is this?" he exclaimed, dropping the boy's legs.

"What's the matter?" asked Keating, surprised at his companion's exclamation.

Hissop stooped down and saw the form of a man in his path.

Looking closer he saw that it was Sanders, with his face covered with blood.

"Thunderation!" he ejaculated. "There's somethin' wrong."

"Somethin' wrong! What do you mean?" asked Keating.

"This is Sanders, bleedin' like a pig. I ain't sure but he's dead."

"Sanders dead!" cried Keating, dropping Dick on the grass and stepping forward.

"No, he isn't dead. I kin feel his heart beat. He's badly knocked out, though. Somethin' has happened to him. Lucky that I have some of that whisky but I treated old Blossom to. Look in the shed, but I don't believe you'll find Drake nor his friend the crook. This is blamed funny. Sanders' face is almost battered out of shape. There's been some crooked work here, or my name's not Hissop."

Keating struck a match and flashed it in the shed, but saw no signs of either Drake or Jobson.

"You'd better go to the brook yonder, Keat, and fetch some water in your hat; but first help me carry Sanders into the hut."

Keating bent a hand and then suggested that they should bring the boy inside, too, lest he recover and give them the slip.

So they carried Dick in and laid him down at one side.

Keating then went for the water, while Hissop poured some of the whisky down the insensible man's throat.

Sanders was coming to when Keating returned.

Hissop washed the blood from their associate's face, and discovered a nasty wound above his temple.

At last Sanders opened his eyes and Hissop gave him the balance of the whisky, which completed his recovery.

"What in creation happened to you, Bill?" asked Hissop.

"And where are Drake and Jobson?"

"Confound 'em both!" cried Sanders violently, as he struggled to get up and failed from weakness. "They've done us!"

"Done us! What do you mean?" demanded Hissop in surprise.

"I mean that crook has skipped with the money, and Drake is hand and glove with him in the trick."

"Is that a fact?" roared Hissop, while Keating gave a gasp of rage.

"Yes, it is a fact, though Drake denied it. But I know it's a put-up job to leave us in the lurch."

At that interesting moment Dick Darrell sat up in the darkness of the shed.

He had recovered his senses a few minutes since and heard the excited converse of the rascals.

He listened to the row they were now putting up.

"What makes you so sure of it, Bill?" asked Hissop, quivering with disappointment and anger.

Sanders gave his personal reasons.

"How came you to be hurt?"

"Me and Drake had it out about the matter, and when he saw I was gettin' the best of him he picked up a stone and struck me in the head with it. That's all I remember till now."

Hissop and Keating were inclined to take Sanders' view of Drake's treachery, and they cursed their old pal roundly.

"What are we goin' to do?" asked Keating.

"What about the boy, Darrell?" asked Sanders.

"We caught him in front of the constable's house and brought him here."

"We must try and square things with him somehow," said Sanders. "If we can't our name is mud all around. That hound Drake and his pal has the money and we have nothin' but the chance of goin' to prison."

The men swore roundly at the recreant miner, as they considered him.

Taking advantage of the darkness, and the fact that the men were off their guard, Dick Darrell edged his way toward the doorway.

"Strike a match and take a look at the kid," said Sanders.

At those words Dick knew he must make a dash for liberty at once if he was to escape the rascals, consequently he rose to his feet and, as the match flared up, sprang for the door, tripping over Keating in his haste.

"Stop him! He's gettin' away!" ejaculated Sanders.

Keating and Hissop made a simultaneous jump for Dick, and would have caught him, only they came together at the entrance and thus blocked each other.

When they got outside of the shed Dick had the advantage of several yards' start.

The two miners proved to be such good runners that Dick couldn't shake them off.

Dick led them a long race, but they clung to his track with the tenacity of bulldogs, since they felt that if he managed to get away from them they would have to face the music for the part they had played in the robbery of the office safe, notwithstanding that they had not benefited a single penny by the crime.

Finally Dick reached the end of the Keystone property and sprang over the fence of an old and dilapidated farm, which the Keystone Company and other mining interests had tried to buy at different times on the supposition that there must be coal on the land, as it was found everywhere else in the valley.

Hissop and Keating followed him, but the ground being well wooded, they lost sight of him pretty soon, and finally woke up to the fact that he had at last succeeded in giving them the slip.

They knocked around for half an hour in a futile attempt to find him, and then threw up their hands.

Dick in the meanwhile kept on leisurely toward the old farmhouse, where he saw a light in two of the lower windows.

The owner of the farm, whose name was Jason Clark, was something of a hermit, and lived there all by himself.

It was said that he had not a single relative in the world to leave the property to, a property that might prove immensely valuable in coal deposits.

Dick, seeing the light in the windows on the ground floor, wondered if the old man got up so early in the morning, for he figured that it must be about three o'clock.

He approached one of the windows and looked into the plainly furnished sitting-room.

What he saw made him gasp.

The old hermit was bound to a chair in the center of the room, and gagged with a handkerchief, while over in one of the corners Martin Drake was rifling an old-fashioned escritoire, or writing-desk and book-case combined.

the robbery of this old man to his evil deeds. I wonder where his companion, the crook, is? Upstairs, I suppose, hunting for loot. I'd like to capture Drake. He's the ring-leader of the robbery. If I was sure he was alone I'd take a chance; but I wouldn't stand much show against the two of them."

Dick watched Drake's impatient search for spoil, and occasionally glanced at the helpless old man as he squirmed about in his chair.

The rascally miner, after searching every nook and corner of the escritoire, scattering books and papers about on the carpet, and dumping out the contents of every drawer, which he hastily pawed over, left the old piece of furniture with nothing to reward him for the time he had wasted on it.

His bunged-up face looked as dark as a thunder-gust.

He was mad over the lack of results.

He walked straight to the old man, and shaking his hairy fist in his wrinkled countenance, said something to him that Dick couldn't hear.

His action, however, spoke for itself.

Drake partially removed the handkerchief from the hermit's mouth so that he could answer, but the old man refused to talk with him.

The miner grew furious over Clark's obstinacy and, raised his fist as if it was his intention to smash the hermit in the face.

Then he changed his mind as if some idea had struck him.

There was a heavy stool near by.

Drake drew this forward, and taking the cover from the table tore it into long strips.

"What's he up to now?" wondered Dick.

The watcher wasn't kept long in ignorance of Drake's fiendish intention.

The rascal removed the old man's shoes and socks and then bound his legs tightly to the stool.

The red embers of a fire were burning in the old-fashioned open fireplace.

Drake walked out of the room, and in a few minutes returned with an armful of fuel.

With this he fed the fire into a lively blaze.

When he had it well started he pulled the hermit out of his chair and laid him down on the carpet.

This left his feet up on the stool.

Then the rascal deliberately dragged the stool close up to the fireplace so that the old man's bare soles would be presented to the heat of the fire.

Dick saw, with a thrill of horror, that Drake intended to subject Jason Clark to that old-fashioned torture—the fire test.

As the heat began to blister the old man's soles he writhed about on the floor and tried to draw his feet with the stool away.

Drake prevented him doing this by bracing one of his muscular legs against the stool.

"I can't stand by and see this going on," cried Dick to himself in great indignation. "I don't care what the consequences may be, I'm going to interfere."

Thus speaking, Dick looked around and soon spied a stout piece of wood that made an excellent cudgel.

Armed with this he made for the back of the house.

He found the door opening on the kitchen was slightly ajar.

Through this he made his entrance and felt his way in the darkness to a door.

This let him into a hallway, and the old man's screams came clearly to his ears and spurred him on to action.

Slipping toward a door that, from the sounds within, he believed to be the room where the tragedy was going on, he opened it and dashed into the apartment.

Drake saw him and sprang up with an exclamation of surprise and rage, thus giving the old man a chance to pull the stool away from the fire, and terminate the acute part of the torture he was undergoing.

Dick gave the rascal no time to think, but attacked him with the club so vigorously that Drake was thrown into confusion and gave ground.

The boy, with blazing eyes, followed him, and Drake took refuge on the opposite side of the table.

The room was lighted by a candle stuck in a heavy, ancient metal candlestick which stood on the table.

Quick as a flash Dick seized the candlestick and flung it into the rascal's face.

CHAPTER XIII.

DICK SAVES THE OLD HERMIT.

"My gracious!" exclaimed Dick. "What a rascal Drake is! Not satisfied with swindling his associates out of their share of the money stolen from the company's office, he must add

The fellow threw up his hands, but not quick enough to avoid getting a stunning blow on the forehead.

He uttered a roar of pain and a string of imprecations that the boy cut short by springing around at him and stretching him senseless on the floor with a swing of his stick.

The candle had been snuffed out and the room was now illuminated only by the fire.

Dick stood over Drake until he was sure that the rascal was knocked out, and then he listened for the coming of the crook, whom he supposed to be in the house, and who he thought would be attracted by the uproar.

Not a sound from any other part of the house reached his ears.

Picking up the candle and candlestick he lighted the former at the fire and replaced it in its socket in the latter.

Getting out his jack-knife he went to Jason Clark and quickly released him, helping the groaning victim back into his easy chair.

"Is there another man in the house?" asked Dick.

The hermit shook his head.

"Then this rascal attacked you alone?"

The old man nodded feebly.

Dick dragged the unconscious miner around so that Jason Clark could see that his persecutor was out of business, and then proceeded to tie the scoundrel hand and foot with the strips of table-cloth the rascal had used on the hermit.

When he had accomplished this he turned to the pain-racked hermit.

"Have you any butter in the house?" he asked.

"Yes, in the kitchen cupboard," groaned the old man.

The boy hurried out to the kitchen, found the cupboard and discovered a small quantity of butter in a cracked bowl.

He rushed back with it to the sitting-room and started in to apply it to the hermit's blistered feet.

This simple method gave the old man immediate relief, though it did not take all the pain away at once.

When Dick had used up all the butter he asked Jason Clark how he felt.

"Much better," he whispered feebly, with a look of gratitude. "Who are you, young man?"

Dick told him his name and where he worked.

"I shall never forget that you saved me from a terrible torture," said the hermit. "He wanted to force me to tell him where my money was hidden. But I haven't any money. I'm a poor old man. Very poor and lonely. Very poor and lonely," he repeated. "You saved my life for a little while. I don't want to die yet. No, no, not yet. I'm very poor, but I don't want to die. It's a terrible thing to be laid away deep in the cold ground, where I'd never be able to see my gold any more. No, no, I don't mean that. My mind wanders. I haven't any gold, boy, not a single shining coin; but I dream that I have. I dream that I have. And it's a pleasant dream to take it out, and count it over and over, and feel it slipping through my fingers. It is pleasant music to my old ears to hear it jingle and clink, jingle and clink!"

The light suddenly faded from the hermit's eyes and he looked furtively at the boy.

"What was I saying?" he asked eagerly.

"You were speaking about counting gold and hearing it jingle," replied Dick.

"I was dreaming, only dreaming," said the old man feverishly. "I haven't any gold—not a single coin. You won't tell anybody that I have, will you? They'd come here like that man and try to rob, perhaps murder, me. The world is very bad. I have found it so. That's why I live by myself. That's why——"

He stopped and looked at Dick.

"We've all got to die some time," he muttered. "Why not I? And I'm old, too. I can't live much longer—not much longer. Boy, will you come and see me once in a while? You shan't regret it. I will——"

"Sure, I'll come if you wish me to," replied Dick heartily.

"I'll come over after I'm through work to-morrow—or rather to-night, for I see that it is four o'clock in the morning now."

The little clock on the mantel struck that hour while he was speaking.

"How came you to be around here at this hour?" asked the hermit curiously.

"I'll tell you when I see you again. It would be too long a story to go over now. I haven't been to bed to-night, and don't expect to go there till to-night. Can I help you to your bed?"

"No, no; I'll sleep here in my chair. I often do that. Can you drag this man outside? I don't want him in here. And see that he cannot come back to attack me after you are gone."

"I'll look after him. Have you any rope about the house?"

"There is a rope in the barn. The door is not locked."

"Well, good-night, Mr. Clark. I'll see you to-night."

"Good-night, boy. You have done a good thing for yourself. You will find that I am grateful. I'll make you rich—yes, yes, very rich, very rich. I can't take any money with me, so you shall have it; but, remember, not a word, boy—not a word. This is between you and me. You and me—remember!"

"He's nutty," thought Dick. "That torture has set his mind off its trolley."

He stooped, grabbed hold of the unconscious Drake and dragged him from the room and the house.

Carrying him over to the barn Dick got into the building without any difficulty.

He found plenty of rope hanging around.

Yanking the rascal up against one of the posts Dick tied him so carefully that it was clearly impossible for him to get free through his own exertions.

Then closing the door, he started back for his own village.

CHAPTER XIV.

DICK RECOVERS THE OLD MONEY-BOX.

Dick reached the fence that enclosed the old hermit's property and was about to climb over it when his sharp eyes caught the flash of a match through the bushes.

"Hello!" muttered the boy, coming to a stop. "Somebody is lighting a pipe."

So he crawled up to the fence and looked through.

Just then the person on the other side struck a second match, and the glow revealed his face to Dick.

It was neither Keating nor Hissop, but Jobson, the crook, and on the ground beside him lay the company's money-box.

"I wonder how I'm goin' to git out of this blamed valley before daylight?" he heard the rascal mutter. "Here I've been walkin' for hours and I haven't any idea where I'm at. I've been tryin' to avoid them coal mines, but there seems to be one at every turn, and on the other side is the river. I'd give \$500 for a boat at this minute. If I could get across the river I'd be safe. I'd sooner face a detective than one of my late pals. I'll bet they're lookin' for me and their share of the money I copped."

The rascal got up, walked a few feet away and stood looking to the right and then to the left, as if trying to figure out in which direction he ought to continue his journey.

Instantly the temptation came to Dick to try and get hold of the money-box.

The very idea of depriving the fellow of his booty right under his nose sent a thrill of excitement through the boy's blood.

Dick, therefore, didn't lose any time considering the chances, but pushing his head and shoulders through the opening between the middle and bottom fence rails he seized the box and pulled it softly toward him.

Inside of half a minute he had it in his possession.

"Now to get away. If I can hand this over to the constable I'll have done a pretty good night's work," he said to himself as he crawled away from the fence and started to get out of the hermit's property at some other point.

In order to do this and avoid the probability of meeting the crook, who would naturally be in a pretty bad humor over the mysterious disappearance of the money-box, he made a wide detour of the farm and finally got over the fence half a mile from the spot where he had captured the box.

Then he started for the village by as direct a course as possible.

It was half-past five and daylight when Dick pounded on the constable's door.

The officer poked his head out of an upper window and asked who was there.

"Dick Darrell. I want to see you right away."

"What's the trouble?" asked the constable, surprised at the boy's early visit.

"The coal company's office has been broken into early this morning and the safe looted," replied Joe.

"The dickens you say!" gasped Mr. Green. "I'll dress myself and be down in a minute."

A minute meant about five, at the end of which interval the officer opened the door and invited the boy to enter.

"Come into your sitting-room and I'll tell you what I've been through since nine o'clock last night," said Dick.

"But this robbery you spoke of?"

"Is part of my story."

Dick then began at the beginning and told his story straight through to the point where he recaptured the stolen money-box from the crook.

"This will be the making of you, Dick," said Mr. Green, slapping him on the back. "The company will not fail to recognize your services with a very substantial reward."

"I'm not looking for a reward. I'm satisfied to know that I've done my full duty to the people who employ me."

No time was lost in going over to Mr. Taylor's residence, which was the most pretentious house in the neighborhood.

He was not up, but the cook, who admitted the visitors, went to his room and aroused him, telling him that Constable Green wanted to see him at once on business of the utmost importance.

He came downstairs in ten minutes and met his callers in the dining-room.

"This is an early call, Mr. Green," he said, glancing casually at Dick, whom he recognized as the engineer's assistant. "You say you called on business of—"

"Great importance, sir. I have just been informed by this boy that the office building was broken into during the night, the safe cracked and the box containing the men's pay carried off."

"Great Scott! You don't mean that!" cried the superintendent, visibly startled.

"It seems to be a fact, sir; but you need not be alarmed about the money, for Darrell, after a night of thrilling adventure, succeeded in recovering the stolen money-box and capturing the ringleader of the enterprise."

"Is it possible!" cried Mr. Taylor, looking at Dick in surprise.

"Yes, sir," put in Dick, "and here is the box to prove it."

He placed the cash-box on the table before the superintendent.

Mr. Taylor recognized it at once, and could no longer doubt the fact as stated.

"Let me hear your story, my lad," he said.

Dick at once told him the same story he had previously related to Mr. Green.

"Very good. That crook, whose name you say is Jobson," looking at Dick, "ought to be captured before he can get a great way from the valley. You'd better send your assistant after him, Mr. Green."

"I will," said the constable.

"As for Hissop, Keating and Sanders; I presume they have already left the village in order to avoid arrest. I will telephone the Blackton authorities to look out for them. Now, my boy, you had better go home and go to bed. I will see that your place is filled for the day. You certainly are not in shape to go to work after the strenuous night you have put in for the company, nor would it be fair to expect you to do anything more for the present. Report at my office this afternoon about three, as I wish to see you further about this affair."

"Very well, sir," answered Dick, who was then excused and started for home, where on his arrival he was greeted by Myrtle with an exclamation of joy.

"Where have you been all night, Dick?" she asked. "I've been greatly worried about you. I didn't sleep a bit thinking that something dreadful had happened to you."

"Do you really think so much of me as that?" he asked laughingly.

"You know I think as much of you as though you were my brother," she replied earnestly.

"And I think more of you than if you were my sister," he replied.

Myrtle blushed and then smiled.

"Do tell me where you've been. Father has been out nearly all night, too. He came in about two hours ago and went right to bed. He's been drinking heavily again," she said with a sigh and a tearful look.

"It wasn't his fault altogether."

"How do you know that?" she asked in surprise.

"You will learn as I tell my story," replied Dick, who then explained for the third time all that he had gone through during the night.

To say that Myrtle was astonished would express her feelings but mildly.

But more than all she was very happy to know that Dick had turned up safe and sound, for the boy occupied a very large share of her heart, whether he guessed that fact or not.

CHAPTER XV.

MARTIN DRAKE AND HIS PALS RECEIVE THE FULL PENALTY.

Constable Green on his arrival at Jason Clark's farm found Drake exactly as Dick had left him, except that he was now conscious.

The constable went in and had a talk with the old hermit, and the recluse's story tallied exactly in every particular with Dick Darrell's.

The constable carried Drake back to the village and locked him up in one of the strong-rooms attached to his house, from which at the same time he released Jimmy Sanders, whose time was about up.

Early that afternoon Sanders was arrested in Wilkes-Barre boarding a train for Philadelphia and was brought to the village and locked up in the room adjoining the cell in which Drake was confined.

Lines were out for Hissop and Keating, but they were not seen anywhere.

Mr. Green's deputy also failed to capture Jobson, the crook.

The offices of the Keystone Company were at Wilkes-Barre, and thither Mr. Taylor went as soon as he had straightened matters up in the village.

He saw the president and a couple of the directors, and told them the story of the robbery of the office at the mine, and how Dick Darrell had captured the leader of the enterprise and recovered the stolen money-box, with its contents intact, from the crook who had looted the safe.

"How long has this boy been with the company?" asked the president.

"Close on to five years," replied the superintendent. "He began as a mule driver in the mine, and about nine months ago he was transferred to the engine-room. The engineer reports him as an uncommonly smart lad, and worthy of any recognition the company thinks proper to bestow on him in connection with this matter."

"Send him to my office to-morrow," said the president.

That afternoon at four Dick had a short interview with the superintendent after his return from Wilkes-Barre.

Mr. Taylor handed him a pass over the railroad line to Wilkes-Barre, telling him to report at the president's office in that city next day.

That evening Dick visited Jason Clark, according to his promise, and found the hermit expecting him.

They had a long talk, during which the hermit assured Dick that he would remember him when he came to die.

"All I ask in return, Dick," he said, "is that you will visit me twice a week if circumstances will permit. You are the first person I've taken a fancy to in many years, and I feel certain that you deserve the good opinion I've formed of you."

Dick promised to call on him as regularly as possible, and then took his leave.

Next morning, before he went to Wilkes-Barre, Dick appeared at the examination of Drake and Sanders before Justice Robinson.

Dick told his story once more, and when he had finished there wasn't any doubt among the spectators as to the guilt of the two men.

They had nothing to say in their own behalf and were sent to the county jail at Blackton for trial.

Dick went to Wilkes-Barre and had a very satisfactory interview with the president of the company, who had him tell his story over again for his benefit and that of the directors who had been summoned to hear it.

A special meeting was convened and a resolution was introduced tendering Dick Darrell a vote of thanks for his conduct in saving the company's money and catching Martin Drake, the chief rascal.

Dick was also voted a reward of \$1,000 as an evidence of the company's appreciation of his valuable services, and he carried the money back with him on the train as far as Blackton, where he deposited it in a savings bank.

Two weeks later Hissop and Keating were caught by the Philadelphia police and Constable Green went to that city to bring them to Blackton, where they were locked up pending their trial.

The trial of the four men came off in about six weeks, and they were easily convicted on Dick's testimony.

They received ten years each.

In addition to his reward of \$1,000, Dick's pay was raised, and he was slated for early advancement in the company's service.

The post of night watchman around the engine-house and breaker becoming vacant, Dick secured it for old Ben Blossom on his consenting to sign the pledge and keep sober.

Ben, who thought a whole lot of Dick, turned over a new leaf from the date of his appointment and kept his word to drink no more.

Three months passed, during which Dick visited Jason Clark with unfailing regularity.

One day Jason Clark sent to Blackton for the lawyer who had drawn up his will in which he had left everything he owned to various charities.

One evening when Dick visited the old recluse he was surprised to see no light in the windows of the sitting-room.

As the kitchen door, by which he always entered, was not secured, the boy had no trouble in getting into the house.

Dick entered the sitting-room and found the fire out.

In his easy chair before the fender sat the hermit, stiff and cold in death, his staring eyes proclaiming the fact at once.

"Good gracious! He's dead!" gasped Dick, gazing at the fallen jaw and ghastly-looking eyes. "Stone cold, too. Must have died many hours ago, possibly yesterday. Poor old chap. What he always dreaded has come to pass at last. For some strong reason, which he never told me, he did not want to die. And yet I never could see what pleasure he could find in living the way he did. The very last time I was here he told me he had made a new will and left me his farm and everything he owned. He said Lawyer Carter, of Blackton, had the will and would see that I got what was coming to me. He told me this farm would make me rich, as it stood over one of the most valuable coal beds in the county. The Keystone and Lehigh Valley coal companies had offered him a big sum for the farm. He advised me by no means to sell the property when I came of age, but to form a company and mine the coal on an independent basis, which I could readily do, as he owned the right of way to the river, where the coal could be shipped independently of the railroad company. Well, I must notify the undertaker and the coroner, and also Lawyer Carter, of the old man's death. I suppose I ought to take charge of the premises till the lawyer arrives."

Thus speaking Dick hurried back to the village with his melancholy tidings.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

Dick carried the intelligence of the hermit's death to Constable Green, who at once notified the Blackton coroner to come over and investigate the cause of the old man's sudden taking off, which the officer said was probably due to natural causes.

Dick, the constable and Micky Grady went to the farm that night and remained in charge of the body.

The coroner came over next morning, accompanied by the lawyer and an undertaker.

After looking the corpse over the county official gave a permit for its burial and the undertaker proceeded to get the body ready for interment.

After all was over the lawyer took Dick to his office, read the old man's will to him, and handed him a sealed letter directed to him in the hermit's handwriting.

"The farm is a very valuable property, young man," said Lawyer Carter. "I know that Jason Clark refused \$150,000 from the Lehigh Valley Coal Company for it. It will be necessary that the court appoint a guardian for you until you come of age. Have you any preference in the matter?"

"If it is necessary for me to have a guardian I should like to have Mr. Murray, the Keystone Company's engineer, appointed, as I know him to be a square man, and I am sure he will look after my interests as if they were his own."

"Very well. I will go to the village and see Mr. Murray about the matter," said the lawyer.

Dick did not open the hermit's letter until he got back to the village, then he discovered to his surprise that Jason Clark had been indeed something of a miser, for he told in

the letter about a small chest of gold, containing coin to the value of something like \$80,000, that was concealed under the flooring of his bedroom on the second floor.

All this money was to revert to Dick Darrell.

Mr. Murray accepted the guardianship of Dick, and the lawyer duly secured his appointment.

Mr. Murray advised Dick to resign his job with the company and enter an academy at Wilkes-Barre so as to lay the foundation, at least, of a good education.

Dick agreed that that would be the best thing for him to do, though he hated to leave the village, his old associates, with whom, now that he was known to be rich, he was more popular than ever, and above all, Myrtle Blossom.

He held an interview with the girl on the subject, and it was a tearful one on her part.

"I don't want you to go away, Dick," she sobbed. "I don't know how I will get along without you. You've been like a brother to Pansy and me ever since father took to idleness and drink."

"But your father is all right now," said Dick.

"Thanks to your efforts he is; but will he hold out after you are gone?"

"Mr. Murray, my guardian, will make it his business to keep him in hand, Myrtle."

"And you really intend to leave us?"

"It is best for me that I should, and I know you think too much of me to stand in my light."

"I do, I do," sobbed the girl.

"And you love me enough to promise to become my wife some day?" he asked.

The girl began to cry.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"You are rich. You told me that Mr. Murray said you would be easily worth a quarter of a million when you reached your twenty-first birthday. Surely you cannot want a poor girl like me for your wife."

"I want nobody else but you. Will you marry me by and by?"

But Myrtle wouldn't say "Yes."

All she would say was that she loved him with all her heart—that she would never love any one else—that she would leave him free to find any other girl he might learn to prefer to her; but if when he came of age he still wished her to marry him he must come to her home and ask her the question again.

So Dick went to Wilkes-Barre satisfied that she would ultimately become his if they both lived.

Three years passed away, during which Dick frequently visited the mining village to see his guardian and Myrtle.

One day he, Mr. Murray and Lawyer Carter went to the court and the legal proceedings that made Dick Darrell his own boss were put through, and the engineer was discharged from his position as the boy's guardian.

During the interval since the hermit's death the farm was leased to a Swede at a nominal rent, and this farmer made a pretty good thing out of it for himself.

Dick notified him that he would have to leave at the expiration of his lease, which would not be renewed.

Darrell, with the help of Lawyer Carter, formed the Black Diamond Coal Mining Company, an independent concern, and in due time operations began on the farm.

Then it was that he asked Myrtle Blossom the all-important question again, and this time her answer was "Yes," though Dick had no doubt of that all along.

He gave her father a sinecure in the employ of the company, and also appointed Mr. Murray as his chief engineer at a fat salary.

He didn't forget Micky Grady, who was now seventeen, and put him into the office, where he had every chance for advancement.

And now, reader, I have come to the end of my story, which is the history of a real boy who, through nerve, energy and good luck, rose from a humble position in the engine-house of the Keystone Coal Mining Company to the office of general manager of the Black Diamond Coal Mining Company, to-day one of the most important corporations in the Pennsylvania coal fields.

Next week's issue will contain "UNDER A LUCKY STAR; OR, THE BOY WHO MADE A MILLION IN WALL STREET."

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"The annual increase of our wealth is estimated to be fifty billions of dollars. The American people are not asked to give anything to their government, but merely to invest a small percentage of the annual increment of wealth in this country and take in return from their government the strongest security on the face of God's green earth; to receive in return for the money lent $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum, both principal and interest exempted from all taxation except estate or inheritance taxes, and with the further provision that if the government should issue any other bonds during the period of this war at a higher rate of interest the purchaser of a Liberty Loan Bond may turn it in and get a new bond at the higher rate of interest.

"In protecting the credit of the United States government you are protecting your own credit, you are protecting your own business, you are protecting every interest you have in life and property. In doing that you are rendering a patriotic service in supplying the sinews of war to your country."—*William G. McAdoo, Secretary of the Treasury.*

LABOR BUYS LIBERTY BONDS.

While it is not possible to give exact figures either as to the number of subscribers or the amount of bonds bought, yet reports from many corporations and firms which are large employers of labor show that the working men of America were numerous and liberal purchasers in the Liberty Bonds.

There can be no doubt that the working men of America are a class of citizens whose patriotism and ability afford a tremendous market for government bonds. The safety of the Liberty Loan Bonds and their exemption from all federal, State and local taxation, except inheritance and estate taxes, constitute them an ideal investment for the smaller investors, and the labor element of America seems to have been quick to appreciate the fact. That they will be liberal purchasers in the next issue of the Liberty Loan Bonds may confidently be relied on.

The working men are willing to buy liberally, according to their means and are able to buy largely in the aggregate. The assistance given them by their employers, in many instances, in the way of arranging it so that they could pay for the bonds by installments out of their wages, together with similar facilities offered by practically all of the banks of the country, greatly aided the wage earners of the country in their purchase of Liberty Loan Bonds.

FINANCING THE WAR.

The United States is financing itself in this war by loans and taxes. It obtains funds from the people, some by taxation and some by the sale of bonds,

and then it goes into the markets and buys from the people what it needs. The people supply the government with money and the government with this money buys from the people what it needs for the war.

There are three sources from which the United States can draw the sinews of war. First is the fixed property of the nation. This represents our farms, factories, mines, railways and all other property, including accumulated savings. From the corpus or body of none of these, except the accumulated savings, will the government obtain war funds, and even from the accumulated savings it will draw a relatively small portion. These accumulated savings are invested in industries and business which are necessary to the country's welfare and prosperity, and it is only that portion of these savings which are seeking investment that the government will receive in exchange for bonds.

The second and the great source from which the government is to derive its war fund is the wealth produced during the war. Parts of this it will obtain by taxation and part in exchange for bonds. The annual production of the United States, from its farms, mines, factories, and other sources, amounts to fifty billion dollars a year, and out of this fifty billion dollars will come the funds, part from taxes and part from the sale of bonds, with which the United States will finance itself during this war.

By taxation this generation will pay its portion of the cost of the war. By the sale of bonds the next generation is called upon to pay its portion, and this last portion will be paid from the wealth production after the war.

By this method the capital of the country, its sources of income and wealth, are unimpaired. It is only the yearly increment of this property that is called upon to bear a portion of the cost of the war. Thus, despite the waste of war and the destruction of property involved, the country may emerge from the conflict stronger financially, more efficient and even wealthier than before. What the government receives, it receives from the people without impairing the sources of wealth of the country, and passes it back to the people in exchange for the production of the country.

The government collects the current taxes, and by means of bonds anticipates taxes of the years to come, and all the money thus acquired passes back into the hands of the taxpayers. This is why governments which follow sound economic methods not only are not impoverished by wars, but sometimes emerge the stronger, as England did after the Napoleonic wars and the United States did after our great Civil War.

OUT FOR EVERYTHING

OR

THE BOY WHO TOOK CHANCES

By GASTON GARNE

(A SERIAL STORY.)

CHAPTER XXIII.

'WE'LL DO IT IF WE LIVE AN HOUR!'

As he turned he saw that Grace had rejoined the family party.

"A friend who wants to see me," Ned explained.

"Oh, then it has nothing to do with our family affair?" Mr. Fulham asked.

"Nothing whatever, sir."

Ned lied with a purpose. He had already gotten Chug Bailey into trouble over the escaped convict. He did not propose to say anything that might drag Grace's father into the legal side of the scrape.

"I'm going out a little while, I think," Ned said, slowly.

Grace followed him to the front door, where Ned took down his hat.

"Are you going to tell me what that message was?" she whispered, eagerly suspicious.

"Why, I can't very well," Ned replied, slowly. "It's the affair of a friend of mine."

"Oh!"

Grace drew back, then turned and walked away.

Warren knew in an instant that she had guessed a good deal, and that he had hurt her.

"Grace!" he called, softly.

But she was passing in through the library door.

"Oh, no matter!" he muttered, grimly. "I'm taking so many chances nowadays that I may as well take the extra chance of making Grace mad. Whether she's mad or not, I'm not going to take any risk of dragging the Fulham family into jail with me."

Once outside the grounds, and after glancing at his watch, Ned walked briskly to the railway station.

He was there not much ahead of his train.

In order not to leave any track of his movements, he did not buy a ticket to Weston, but paid fare on the train.

Weston was nearly an hour's ride away.

It was the town to which Chug had driven the hunted man in the automobile.

Ned did not know the town, but upon his arrival he found it to contain only one business street.

And there he quickly found the office of Lawyer Bowles.

Ascending the stairs, Ned knocked at the door. It was opened in a twinkling. Edward Kirk's face peered out.

"Come in," whispered the unhappy man, and quickly shut the door, locking it after our hero.

Ned followed into the lawyer's consulting room. This door also Kirk closed and locked.

"Come into the inner office," whispered Kirk, tremulously.

Then the hunted man sank into a chair, trembling as if with the ague.

"See here," breathed Ned, "you're not losing your nerve, are you? Not that I'd blame you, though."

"I'm not losing my courage, Ned," faltered Kirk. "But no wretch on the rack ever suffered more torment than I'm suffering now."

"How do you come to be here?"

"Your friend brought me over here to Bowles' house. Bowles is an old college friend of mine, and a clever lawyer. He was friend enough to shield me in his own home. Last night, a little before daylight, he brought me down here and let me in. He thought it the safest place to hide."

"Are you in danger of being found here?" Ned asked.

"I don't think I'm in any extraordinary danger just now," Kirk replied, his lips trembling. "But——"

Here Kirk leaned forward, his face ashen gray, but his eyes glittering.

"Ned, the only man on earth who can clear my name, who can prove me innocent, is the man who committed the crime for which I was sentenced to prison. And that man is within three miles of here now. Bowles learned that much from the editor of the local paper."

"What's the fellow's name?" Ned asked, quickly.

"Sommers. He's an old hand in the criminal world."

"Then here's where we go after Sommers," Warren declared, swiftly.

"But, Ned, the disconcerting part is that Sommers is dying."

"All the more need for haste, then!" Ned retorted, rising to his feet. "Where can I find him?"

"Sit down, Ned. Nothing is to be gained by rushing. You'll have to understand the whole thing."

"I'm listening."

"Ned, it's one of the queerest freaks of fate that the man who committed the crime for which I was sent to prison should have his home in this part of the world, and that he should come home to die. But I was telling Bowles about Sommers, and sure I was that Sommers was the real criminal. Then, when Bowles was on the street this forenoon, he met the local editor. The editor spoke about the noted criminal who was dying at his home near here. Bowles flew back here with the news. Then he hurried over to the house where Sommers is passing his last hours. When there was no one else by to hear the confession, Sommers told my friend that he committed the crime. Yet try as he would, Bowles couldn't get him to sign a confession, nor to make one in the presence of others. Oh, it's fearful, this stubbornness of a dying criminal!"

"But Sommers can be made to talk. There must be some way," Warren insisted.

"Only one way. That is for me to go to Sommers myself. Bowles believes that would work. He thinks that I can persuade the wretch to do what is right by me."

"Where is Bowles now?"

"With Sommers, or close by."

"And why are you not there?"

"Because," smiled the hunted man, bitterly, "my description has been sent broadcast by the police. Let me show myself on the street, and I'm either a prisoner or a dead man at once. I sent for you because you are the only one who can help me. Bowles says so, too."

"Well, I'm on deck, and every ounce of my nerve with me," Ned smiled as he arose again. "What's the lay-out—if you have one?"

"Bowles says I must get over to Sommer's place in a closed carriage—closed so that I may not be seen on the way. And the driver must be one who knows the faces of my enemies. That's you, Warren."

"That's me," Ned admitted, ungrammatically. "Have you got the directions for reaching the place where Sommers is?"

"Here, written down."

"Then I'll get the carriage and turn driver. It's off to Sommers for us. Cheer up, Mr. Kirk. We'll get that confession somehow. We'll do it if we live an hour! Now listen. You can see from the window when I drive out. You have the shutters drawn, I notice, so that you can look down into the street without being seen. Very good; when you see me drive up, come down to the street. Keep just inside the door until you hear me whistling some old tune. You'll know then that the way is clear. Then slip into the cab and sit as far back as you can. Leave the rest to me!"

"Warren," cried the older man, gratefully, as he seized our hero's hand, "you're all clear grit and pure gold!"

"Oh, when I get interested in anything, I like to see it put through," Ned smiled. "And we'll put this through, too. Don't you worry."

Making hot time to the nearest livery stable, Ned told a cock-and-bull story as to why he wanted to hire a one-horse coupe and drive it himself.

He got the rig, however. Mounted on the box, he drove down the street toward the lawyer's office.

At the door he drew up, jumped down and threw the coupe door open, then glanced slowly about.

No one was near who had a suspicious look. Ned began to whistle low.

With quick step Edward Kirk came out of the building, plunging into the coupe.

With a quick bang Warren closed the door, then mounted to the box.

Gathering up the reins as coolly as if this were some mere lark, and not a state prison piece of business, the youngster started the horse away.

Around the corner came a slinking form. Before Ned got a good look this figure had passed the cab.

The man, whoever he was, took a swift look inside the coupe, then hurried on.

"Allert? Is it that confounded cur?" wondered the boy, with a jump.

Allert, the society editor's blackmailing agent? Allert, our hero's sworn foe? Allert, the cur who had served time in the same prison from which Kirk had escaped.

"It looked mightily like Allert!" thrilled Ned, as he watched the shambling figure disappear around the next corner.

Our hero sat feeling as if he were freezing to the seat as he drove away.

"If that's Allert, the game's all over!" he throbbed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A CHANCE IN A MILLION.

"Yes; that was Allert, fast enough!"

The words were ground from Ned Warren's lips. He felt the full impulse of desperation.

"Allert won't do a thing but rush the officers after us. Kirk would sooner be killed than taken. I don't blame him. If he falls into the law's clutches or is killed, I might as well be dead, too, for I never could go back to Grace!"

Slash! The horse spurted under the whip, moving forward at a gallop.

"This is death all around?" uttered Ned, grimly. "We'll kill the horse, too, if it doesn't get us through to safety!"

Yet what safety could there be if the officers got straight on the trail of the hunted fugitive convict?

For the first mile and a half of the way Ned drove at a furious gallop that kept the horse breathing hard.

He was out of Weston now, on a road that led across a river.

"If I could only make that bridge and get on the other side!" quivered the boy. "Once over there we might succeed in getting lost for a little while!"

(To be continued.)

CURRENT NEWS

The Government will establish very shortly in California a large plant for the manufacture of potash, according to announcement made in San Francisco on July 19 by J. W. Turrentine, scientist of the the Department of Agriculture. The potash will be made from kelp harvested in the Pacific Ocean, and is to be used by the United States Army.

A Hartford dispatch says that preparations are being made by the Colt's Patent Fire Arms Manufacturing Company in the city to build the 20,000 Browning machine guns which the United States Government is to buy for the forces that will be sent to France. One of the officers of the company is quoted as saying that it would be the biggest order that the company has received.

Over 300 acres of land at Port Newark Terminal, N. J., is to be taken over by the Government as a base for supplies for Europe. The Government has been negotiating for the property for several weeks. Army officers have made several inspections of it. It is proposed to store at this point supplies needed for the Army and Navy now in France. This will be lightered to ships in New York harbor.

Charles Peterson was saved a \$6 fine in Municipal Court because he wore a Red Cross button. He was arraigned on the charge of drunkenness and disorderly conduct. "Your fine is \$1 and costs of \$5," said Judge John Garlin after examining Peterson. The court was about to call the next case when he noticed Peterson had a Red Cross button on the lapel of his coat. "Because you were patriotic enough to buy that button, I'll remit the fine. You're discharged."

A rifle range to cost about \$75,000 is contemplated at the training camp at Syracuse, N. Y. The range proposed is to be one of the largest in the country and will permit an entire infantry brigade to conduct rifle practice at one time. The ranges provided will be 200, 300, 500, 600, 800 and 1,000 yards, fifty-four targets to each short range and fifteen for each long range. Through the Chamber of Commerce efforts are now being made to secure the necessary land for the range.

Award of contracts for a half million cases of canned peas, the entire supply needed for the Army and Navy for the coming year, was announced July 18, with the comment that the price provided is "much below the present market." The Government's needs were outlined to representatives of the canners in Washington on July 14 by Herbert

Hoover, Quartermaster General Sharpe and officials of the Defense Council's supplies committee. As a result the contracts have been distributed among various firms situated near Army and Navy depots.

Mary Pickford presented a fully equipped ambulance, which she proposes to maintain in France for the duration of the war, to the American Red Cross. The New York Times of July 15 prints a picture of the historic scene of "Our Mary" presenting the ambulance to Lieutenant Henry Woodward, showing her attired in a milliner's conception of a feminine military costume, the component parts of which are a cadet's blouse, a hussar's cap, Russian boots and a full skirt with large pockets. From our knowledge of what male military uniforms cost, Mary's clothing allowance for this scene must have been quite beyond all ordinary estimates.

Preparations have been made by the Navy Department to take possession of the steamship Havana, of the New York-Cuba Steamship Company's fleet, for use as a hospital ship. The Havana will probably be only the first of three or more vessels to be converted to this use to supplement the activities of the aged U. S. S. Solace. The Navy medical authorities have estimated that at least two additional hospital ships are urgently required, and if a third can be obtained without undue difficulty the Solace probably would be relegated permanently to the task on which she is now engaged—that of an ambulance ship between the fleet and shore hospitals. Plans have been made also to obtain three vessels to be used as additional ambulance ships.

Citizens interested in rifle practice and the organization of rifle clubs were invited by Captain William A. Moffett, U. S. N., commandant of the United States Naval Training Station, Great Lakes, Ill., to attend and participate in rifle practice at the opening of the naval training station range, Great Lakes, Ill., on Saturday, July 28. The vice-president of the National Rifle Association, Major William C. Harlee, of the Marine Corps, is temporarily on duty at the Great Lakes Training Station, and will be present to assist those who desire to organize new rifle clubs. All citizens are cordially invited to attend, and as many as possible will be afforded an opportunity to shoot. A letter of invitation was sent to the rifle clubs whose addresses Major Harlee was able to obtain. He wishes those rifle clubs whose addresses he has not obtained to consider the letter addressed to them also. Captain Moffett has generously offered the use of the range each Saturday to members of the rifle clubs.

THE CAVE OF GOLD

—OR—

THE BOY MINERS OF THE ROCKIES

By ED KING

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER I.

BOB AND THE INDIAN.

One evening in June of the year 1901 a bright, handsome, manly-looking youth of perhaps eighteen years was making his way along a rude trail that led through the mountains in the Wisdom River region of Southwestern Montana.

The youth in question was on foot, and over his shoulder was slung a sort of knapsack, in which, doubtless, he carried his food supplies. Under his arm was something which seemed somewhat out of place in this wild, rude region—a violin case.

The youth was clad in miners' costume. Presently the young fellow paused, took off his hat and wiped the sweat from his forehead and then glanced at the sun, which was just disappearing behind the mountains to the westward.

"Well, Bob Baker," he said aloud and in a whimsical manner, "I guess it is time you were going into camp. It must be several miles to Wisdom camp, and your legs are aching like all get-out. Is it camp and rest for you, old fellow?"

He stood looking up the trail toward the north a few moments and then nodded his head.

"Yes, I'll go into camp," he murmured; "and right here at the foot of this slope will be as good a place as I could find in a week's search."

He stepped aside, out of the trail, and seated himself on the grass, after placing his violin case on the ground and unslinging his knapsack.

Again he took off his hat and mopped his forehead.

"Phew!" he wistled, "but it is hot! And, Jove, it is hard work climbing these mountains! And lonesome!—oh, my! I like company, and here I have been tramping the mountains for three days all alone! I would never have believed a few weeks ago that I liked company so well as I now know that I do. Why, I believe that I would enjoy the company of an Indian or a Chinaman, just at this stage of the game."

He was silent a few moments, simply lying back on the grass and taking it easy, and then he murmured:

"Wisdom camp, eh? I wonder when I'll get there?

And I wonder if I have shown myself possessed of wisdom in coming to this wild country? I wonder, now, if this is a wild goose chase that I am on?"

Again he was silent a few moments, and then he drew a little notebook from his pocket, and, opening it, drew forth a newspaper clipping. Opening the clipping out, he looked at it with eager interest. The article was not a long one, being only about a "stickful," but it was evidently important in Bob Baker's eyes. It read as follows:

"A CAVE OF GOLD!"

"A patient who died in the hospital at Denver this morning told a wonderful story regarding a cave of gold which he said that he had discovered up in the Wisdom River district of Southwestern Montana. He said that the cave was a large one—at least fifty feet wide by two hundred feet in depth, and that it was literally lined with pure gold. Everywhere, on every side, on walls, ceiling, and even lying about in lumps and nuggets on the floor, was gold. The hospital people gave him paper and pencil, and he tried to draw a map of the region where the cave was to be found and designate its exact position, but he was too far gone, and did not have strength left sufficient for the work. And when he tried to tell the location of the cave by word of mouth, he failed again, for he was too weak to talk, and only a general idea of the point where this cave of gold is located (if it really exists outside of the patient's imaginations) could be gained. According to his statements, the cave is within eight miles of Wisdom mining camp and almost in a due west direction. But this, in such a rough, broken country, is not much to go by, and one might search till he was as old as Methuselah and never come within a mile of finding the cave.

"Later: Some old miners, who have been interviewed by the reporter who wrote the above, say that they have no doubt regarding the truth of the dead man's statement. They say that for years the Indians in that region have procured lumps and nuggets of gold whenever they wished to do so, and that it has been long believed that somewhere there was a vast deposit of gold, lying in lumps and nuggets, and there could be no more likely place than in a cave. Efforts have been made many times to

follow the Indians, but such efforts have always failed. It is a pity that the dead man did not make a map of the locality and designate the exact spot where the cave is located."

Bob knitted his brows and looked at the clipping and then down the trail.

"It reads all right," he murmured; "and when I was in Denver, it did not seem as if it would be such an awfully hard matter to find the cave. But now that I have got up here into this region, and have tramped along the rough trails over the mountains, I have begun to see that it will be like looking for a needle in a haystack to try to find the cave."

He folded the clipping up and replaced it in the notebook and slipped the book in his pocket.

Then he stretched and pulled his knapsack over beside him.

"I guess I may as well eat something," he murmured. "Tramping the trails certainly give a fellow a good appetite."

The youth drew forth some cold bread and meat and proceeded to eat with a relish. And when he had finished, he rose and went to a little stream that rippled across the trail only a few paces distant, and lying down on his stomach, drank his fill. The water was cold as ice, and in all probability it came from the melting snow higher up the sides of the grim Rockies.

As Bob Baker rose to his feet after drinking from the little stream, he saw a full-blooded Indian standing within a few paces, looking at him in a keen, searching manner.

Bob was startled, but tried not to show it. He stared at the redskin a few moments, and then said:

"Where did you come from?"

"Out uv bushes," with a wave toward the bushes at the other side of the trail.

"Say, you kind of startled me a bit, Indian."

"Injun's name Creeping Panther. Ugh."

"Well, you are pretty good at creeping, it seems to me. I didn't hear you at all."

"Ugh. Injuns no make much noise when move aroun'."

"I should say not!"

"Creeping Panther not well. Um got hurt in fight with bad Injun. Got knife here," and he opened the front of a rude hunting shirt which he had on and revealed an ugly-looking wound in his right shoulder.

"Say, that is pretty bad, sure enough!" said Bob. "I don't see how you manage to get around at all with that to carry."

"Ugh. Injun tough."

"I should say so."

"Ugh. Creeping Panther hungry; white boy got some grub?"

The Indian's eyes turned toward the knapsack with a longing expression in their depths.

"Sure, Creeping Panther! I have plenty of grub, and you are welcome to it. Come over here and sit down."

Bob was so pleased that the redskin was peace-

ably inclined that he was more than glad to share his food with him.

Creeping Panther did as told with alacrity, and Bob sat down near him and opened the knapsack and said:

"Help yourself. Eat all you want."

The redskin's eyes glistened.

"Injun could eat all, ev'ry bit," he said.

"Go ahead," said Bob, sententiously.

"But white boy git hungry by um by, mebbby."

"All I care for is to have enough left for a bite in the morning—just enough to enable me to walk to Wisdom camp."

"Five mile," with a wave of the hand in an up-trail direction.

"Well, I can walk that far without anything to eat in the morning. Go ahead and eat it all."

"Creeping Panther no eat all. Leave some."

He ate heartily, and then went to the little stream and lay down and drank as Bob had done. Then he rose and came and faced the youth.

"What white boy's name?" he queried.

"Bob Baker."

"Stay in this part uv country long, mebbby?"

"I don't know; maybe so, Creeping Panther."

"If do, maybe Creeping Panther git chance to pay white boy back fur grub, ugh."

"Oh, that's all right," with a smile, "I don't want any pay. I am glad that I was able to furnish you with some food."

"Maybe so; but Creeping Panther no furgit. See white boy agin, maybe, when white boy no think about it."

Then he turned and walked away, quickly disappearing behind a clump of bushes.

Bob stared after his visitor till the redskin was out of sight, and then he looked at the well-nigh empty knapsack with half regretful eyes. Then he smiled and shook his head.

"It's all right," he murmured; "the redskin certainly was hungry! And he was wounded, too; yes, he's welcome to the grub."

Then Bob looked up the trail with a thoughtful air.

"Five miles," he murmured. "I've a good mind to go on to the camp yet this evening. The only trouble is that I haven't any money left to pay for a room and breakfast with. I would probably have to sleep out of doors just the same there as if I stay here."

He hesitated a few moments, and then said aloud:

"Yes, I'll go on. By taking it easy I can get there by nine o'clock, and that is early in a mining camp, I judge."

"Help! Help!" suddenly sounded a voice in frightened accents, and whirling and looking down the trail, Bob saw a young fellow, about his own age, in Western costume, coming toward him on the run, and close at the fugitive's heels was a huge cinnamon bear.

(To be continued.)

NEWS OF THE DAY

STONECUTTER'S ERROR MAKES A MAN'S AGE 969 YEARS.

In a burial ground in Germantown there is a tombstone which gives the age of him who lies beneath it, one John Adam, as 969 years.

The records, I believe, show that his age was rightly sixty-nine, and the explanation given is that the stonecutter cut his 9 first and then found he had no room for the 6. So he filled in the 9 with cement and cut behind his first markings.

Time, having worn out the cement, reveals the tomb of an ancient fit to be classed with those mentioned in Genesis.

SOLE SURVIVOR FROM WRECK.

Exactly sixty years ago the sole survivor was rescued from one of the most notable wrecks on the Australian coast.

The ship Dunbar, mistaking the entrance to Sydney harbor by a few yards only, crashed into an opening in the cliff called the "Gap," with precipitous rocks 300 feet high, was battered to pieces and all her passengers of distinguished Australian colonists returning from England were lost, as well as the ship's crew, except one man, James W. Johnson, an Irishman, nineteen years of age, who lay there for three days before being recovered.

By a strange coincidence Johnson, then lighthouse keeper of Newcastle, New South Wales, saved the sole survivor of the Cawarra ten years later.

LAD WALKS FOURTEEN MILES AFTER RATTLER STRUCK HIM.

Willie Kirkpatrick, young son of Henry Kirkpatrick, of Mountain House, was brought to the Oroville (Cal.) Hospital the other day suffering from a rattlesnake bite. The boy was bitten on the index finger by a big rattler as he was scrambling over some rocks in the French Creek Canyon while on a fishing trip.

After being bitten by the rattler the boy had to walk fourteen miles to his home, where a doctor was summoned, so that it was about fourteen hours after the accident before medical aid was given.

Recently the lad was reported as doing well as could be expected, but that all danger from the poisoning was not past.

HIGH COST OF BLACKBERRY JAM MAY CHANGE THE ARMY RATION.

Owing to the prevailing high price of blackberry jam, the War Department, on recommendation of the committee on supplies of the Council of National Defense, is considering the advisability of changing

the regulation jam ration of the Army from blackberry straight to jams of alternating kinds, including peach, strawberry and plum.

"It is not difficult to get blackberry jam for 75,000 men," the committee points out in its recommendation, "but it is not practical to attempt to get it for more than 1,000,000 men, particularly when some of the crop has already been put up in other than regulation Army tins. Moreover, other kinds would prove a pleasant change for the men."

The Army's estimate of requirements for 1,300,000 men for one year is 220,642 cases, each of twenty-four tins.

SAVE OLD PAPERS.

On account of the shortage of paper, old newspapers and other waste paper have risen to an important place in the commercial world. To-day the man who throws down his paper in the cars after he has finished reading it is regarded as somewhat of a spendthrift, says Popular Science. On the Pennsylvania Railroad, for instance, waste papers are now carefully collected. Then thousands of bags have been distributed to stations, workshops and offices of the railroad to facilitate the collection, and a baling machine has been installed by the company, which bales 1,500 tons of old papers annually. This waste paper is sold for \$15 per ton, so that about \$22,500 is realized by the company in this way. In New York City a social workers' club is paying one cent to the children of the poor for every pound of old paper they bring to the club headquarters.

NAVY RADIO SCHOOL AT HARVARD.

President Lowell of Harvard University offered to the Secretary of the Navy the facilities of the university for the training and quartering of 1,000 students to be trained as radio operators. This offer has been accepted. The school for the past three months has been used for training the naval reserve operators for general service. On July 26 the personnel and equipment of the Navy Radio School, Navy Yard, New York, was moved to the university. The school for electricians other than those doing radio duty for the Navy will be retained at the Navy Yard, New York.

It is expected that the complement of the school will be filled at an early date and that trained men for service at sea will be principally obtained from there. The United States Naval Radio Training School will be located at the university for the duration of the war. The school will be under naval discipline and instructors, who will have the co-operation of the university authorities.

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Good Current News Articles

County Assessor the Rev. John McKinney, Petersburg, Ind., married a couple from the country the other day and was asked by the bridegroom what the charge was. He was told that a clergyman accepted whatever was given him. The bridegroom said: "Let's go and smoke." The crowd tittered. The bride whispered something to the husband. He gave her \$1.50. She handed it to the minister. He returned 50 cents of it with thanks.

It is reported that Germany is lining her big guns with a uranium which stands up at a rate of fire destructive to all other known steel alloys. A necessary preliminary to the use of such a substance is a supply of ferro-uranium. This is ordinarily obtained from the uranium oxide which comes as a by-product in the extraction of radium from its ores. Accordingly it presents a problem for the electric furnace. This matter is being looked into by the Bureau of Mines, in connection with Cornell and other universities.

A new rainfall map of the United States has been issued by the United States Department of Agriculture, as the first installment in the meteorological section of the great atlas of American agriculture which the department has had in preparation for some time. The new map is a much more detailed presentation of the annual precipitation of the country, especially of the Western States, than any previously published. It was prepared in the Weather Bureau, and is based on twenty-year records from 1,600 stations, together with about 2,000 shorter records, adjusted to the twenty-year period.

Professor J. Dewar, in a discourse recently delivered at the Royal Institution in London, explained how soap bubbles could be made to last for months, and exhibited several specimens. The

first requisite is that the air used in blowing the bubble shall be free from dust. In Professor Dewar's process the air is filtered through cotton wool, and the bubbles are blown by opening a stop-cock in the air-supply tube. For the soap solution he prefers the purest oleic acid (tested by the iodine number) and ammonium soap (not potassium or sodium). To make a bubble durable the sac of liquid must be removed from its bottom by suction through tubes applied from outside. The lecturer showed bubbles more than half a yard in diameter, blown in glass vessels containing pure air at atmosphere pressure. A little water is kept at the bottom of the vessel. A uniform temperature of about 50 degrees Fahrenheit is favorable to longevity. Some of Professor Dewar's smaller bubbles were nearly a year old.

Grins and Chuckles

Mrs. Willis—So your husband has gone to the border! How does he like it? Mrs. Gillis—I guess he feels right at home. Mrs. Willis—Indeed! Mrs. Gillis—Yes; he complains bitterly about the food.

The lecturer had been describing some of the sights he had seen abroad. "There are some spectacles," he said, "that one never forgets." "I wish you would tell me where I can get a pair," exclaimed an old lady in the audience. "I am always forgetting mine."

Editor—How's the new society reporter? I told him to condense as much as possible. Assistant—He did. Here's his account of yesterday's afternoon tea: "Mrs. Lovely poured, Mrs. Jabber roared, Mrs. Duller bored, Mrs. Rasping gored and Mrs. Embonpoint snored."

"I told you last Sunday, children," said the Sunday school teacher, "that you should all try to make some one happy during the week. How many of you have?" "I did," answered one boy promptly. "I went to see my aunt, and she's always happy when I go home again."

"Have you anything to say in your defense before sentence is pronounced against you?" asked the judge. "Only one thing," said the convicted burglar. "The only thing I have objected to in this trial was being identified by a man that kept his head under the bedclothes the whole time I was in the room. That is not right at all."

One of our boys wrote the following terse narrative about Elijah: "There was a man named Elijah. He had some bears and lived in a cave. Some boys tormented him. He said: 'If you keep on throwing stones at me I'll turn the bears on you and they'll eat you up.' And they did and he did and the bears did."

AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR.

By KIT CLYDE

The storm, which had been so closely brewing, had broken and spent itself; clouds driven and chased were shifting westward, and the masses of foliage overhanging the gate of Hastings Hall were dripping and glistening in the illumine of the freshly-bathed moon, as a young girl, with hasty, faltering gait, passed through this stone portal and down the steps beyond into the deep, shadowy pathways made dim by ancient, widespread trees and the veil of approaching twilight.

"You will leave my house at once!" She hears again this stern command from her cold, worldly aunt. Leave the house she had lately entered, at that aunt's request, indeed, to tarry only so long as was positively necessary, till she should secure the position of governess that had been promised her. It had not been love which had made her aunt invite her into her home. But when her husband's brother had died, leaving his daughter portionless, she knew what the world would say if she did not offer the orphan protection. To be sure, her husband was dead, yet it would appear better to manifest some interest in a girl who had, before her father was compelled to resign the important office he held, gained a position among their circle of acquaintances which would now cause inquiry. Nor had the young cousin been overlooked by the gay company assembled at Hastings Hall. Alas! better had she been than to have aroused within her cousin Ernestine's bosom the fiend of jealousy, which had brought down upon her such woe. Unlike herself, she was the petted queen of fashion, fortune and rank, while she, Marigold Hastings, boasted no gold save that wealth of sun-lit hair which had won her the name she bore.

"'An adventuress!'" I 'alluring the man to whom she is affianced by base means!' Whom can she mean? I was not aware she was engaged to be married. Why not have told me whom she means? There is no one—but stay—could it be any one not visiting here? It could not be! But no, Odrake Maine would never have deceived me! Yet he has visited the Hall, and from him alone have I ever received such attentions as might rouse jealousy in another. Can it be he and Ernestine Hastings are betrothed, and he dared to deceive me! If so, then I had rather have walked London streets a starving work-girl than have permitted his favors, much as I have loved him. Ah! Heavens, it is too bitter a thought!" and with an abandon of despair the girl flung her arms upward as thought appealing for denial of this cruel doubt. "I will never believe it—never—never—never!" And the liquid music of the fountain glittering in the moonbeams seems to echo the words: "Never—never—never!"

"Very fine piece of acting, I declare, Miss Hastings. Pity you can't adopt the stage as your future

career," sounds a gibing voice behind her, and Marigold turns to face her cousin Ernestine Hastings. "How happy you are at guessing! Yes, you didn't need to be told it was Odrake Maine! You knew well when you first began your wiles with him that he belonged to me! There, don't deny it. It isn't worth a lie, you know. So you love him! You admit it! Then read that!" and with the deliberate quietness of a vindictive nature she lays before the affrighted, insulted eyes of her companion a slip of newspaper. And in the pale moonlight Marigold reads these words:

"The announcement of an engagement between Miss Ernestine Hastings, daughter of Lord and Lady Hastings, and Mr. Odrake Maine of Harrow Head, has been made public. The wedding will take place late in the fall."

"You love him!" repeated Miss Hastings, with evident enjoyment at the sight of Marigold's paling features. "You can see how much he loves you."

Thrusting the dire message back toward her, the girl darted away into the shadows, there to hide her shame and misery from the searching, cold eyes of her enemy.

Marigold's frenzied, reckless walk led her before she was aware into the margin of a piece of woodland oft frequented during the day by the visitors assembled at the Hall.

Suddenly, over the leafy carpet of the grove sounded the tread of advancing footsteps, and almost before she could retreat some men appeared in shadowy outline before her. But what is it they bear upon their shoulders? It is that woeful object always startling to an observer, used in bearing the wounded or dead.

Upon it the outlines of a human form partly covered by a railway rug are discernible. At sight of Marigold the men hasten to explain.

"An accident on the train, miss. Terrible work. This poor young man's bad hurted, miss, an' we's taking him to the 'All, miss, as to where he's known, folks say."

Her gaze remains riveted for an instant upon the face of the wounded man, and then a shudder of pain and terror indescribable passes over her.

The face is that of her cousin's fiancé—the man she loves—Odrake Maine.

"Oh, poor child! What is this?"

It is twenty minutes later, and over the inanimate, delicate form a clumsy, awkwardly-built but well-attired man is bending. His movements are clumsy and nervous, and his large, English, somewhat expressionless countenance is flushed, as he raises the fair moon-washed face till it rests upon his arm and presses a flask of brandy to her lips. When Marigold recovers consciousness she recognizes in her assistant Mr. Wygate, a well-to-do curate, who, if the truth be told, had devoted himself most assiduously to the winning of Marigold's good graces during her sojourn at the Hall.

But the remembrance of the awful encounter that had thrown her into her unconscious condition rushes over her, and, oblivious of all things else, she beseeches him to lead her to the house.

Two hours later finds her whirling away—not home, but to a quiet hamlet where dwells an old friend of her father's, alone, save for his good house-keeper. Upon her father's death he had offered her his hospitalities, and for a brief time Marigold had accepted of his courtesy. But he was poor, and his influence impotent, owing to his secluded life.

It had been during her sojourn with Mr. Holibird that fate led Odrake Maine across her pathway. Handsome and winning of manner, distantly related to her father's family, he had won Marigold's regard at once, and it had been through his aid her prospective governess' position had been secured. Without word on either side "soft eyes" had "looked love to eyes which spoke again," and though brief acquaintance was rudely interrupted, Marigold had a right to dream over his parting message and watch for his coming.

"Father is taken very ill at the baths, perhaps dying. I shall seek you upon my return wherever you are."

Again that mocking laugh sounds from her lips as this message recurs to her within the seclusion of Mr. Hollister's hermitage. Yet all through the night, through the next day, through another night, the awful suspense hangs over her. Will he die? She had heard the servants saying as she left the Hall that the doctors had said there was hope. But to her there is no hope—why should she give him thought? Alas, she does not see him dead. Better that she could. She sees him moaning—fever-tossed—a tall, dark girl (dark in her cruel Spanish pallor), bending over him! She will soothe him back to health, or else hold him in her jealous embrace until he is drawn into that inexorable one of death—grim, merciless, unhearing.

Poor child; she little knows how close to that embrace she is herself hovering.

"Do not talk of the wedding outside, Mrs. Priorly," says old Mr. Holibird. "The curate is a sober body himself, you know, and does not care for fuss, and Miss Marigold wishes it very quiet—she is too weak to meet strangers. This terrible fever she has had has left her system in a very weakened condition. Mr. Wygate thinks a great deal of her in his way—he followed her here so quickly I am sure of that, and I am glad to see the daughter of my friend so well provided for. Ah, here she comes now. Well, child, art ready to be married to-morrow?"

Marigold smiled faintly and passed her hand across her face. "Married to-morrow! Was this really true? Well, it didn't much matter—that was best after all—to be married. She couldn't teach now—she was too weak, and she couldn't live on with poor Mr. Holibird."

A tap sounded upon the door, and masculine voices

were heard without, evidently exchanging civilities. Marigold rose, a slight flush in her cheeks. The form that first advanced was one grown familiar to her. It was the man she was to wed on the morrow. He pressed forward, eager to present the bouquet he had brought her.

"Odraks!" It is but a word—a mere breath of speech, yet the tall young man who has entered behind the curate has dashed straight at the sound to the frail girl's side and caught her in his arms. And despite indignant claims and expostulations from the badly treated bridegroom-elect, it is in them that she opens her eyes again to consciousness—to a consciousness of a joy she had believed dead—to see Odrake Maine's eyes gazing with more than the old love into her own.

"Give her to me! She is mine!" blurts forth the outraged, discomfited curate, who, if he did not, like the bridegroom in Lord Lochinvar, "stand dangling his bonnet and plume," had certainly clung to his hat and bouquet for dear life, thus, by his awkward helplessness and determination to shout his claims as he thrust himself forward, caused Mrs. Priorly to spill half of her cherished "camphire," much to the good woman's disgust. "Stop, sir, she is to be my wife to-morrow."

"Marigold, is this true?" cries the startled young man, shrinking from her. "Is it true you would not wait for me? Yet you must have heard I was ill—almost dying."

Marigold's eyes are glued to his, as though she would read into his soul. It is as though no one were there but them two, as she slowly made answer:

"Had you a right to expect I should wait? Were you not affianced to Ernestine Hastings?"

"Never! Who told you such a falsehood?"

"She—herself. She showed me the announcement in the paper."

"A fabrication! I never dreamed of her as a wife, nor of any woman save yourself."

Marigold raised herself erect—her eyes downcast, her cheeks alight like two wild roses in the sunrise.

"Then, Mr. Wygate, deeply sorry as I am to pain you—deeply grateful as I am to you—it were better I never become your wife, for—I love another! Try to forgive me," and she extended a trembling little hand toward him.

But Mr. Wygate was quite beside himself—pardonably so, perhaps. He ignored the hand, forgot his curate's breeding, and, I fear, something else, from the more energetic language which fell from his clerical lips as he tore himself away.

"He'll get over it," quoth Mrs. Priorly, practically; for, to her, Odrake Maine, with his good old name and good old acres, was not to be cut out by a curate, even on the eve of his wedding day.

And he did get over it, for he had chosen another wife within three months from the scene above recorded.

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES

ROBBER PICKS GOLD FROM DENTIST'S TEETH.

A robber who broke into the office of Dr. Bertram Ball, at No. 65 Warburton avenue, Yonkers, N. Y., and stole the gold from his teeth (false ones, of course) and got away with \$500 worth of loot.

The robber broke sets of teeth the dentist had made for patients, selecting gold bridgework in some cases. Patients will be put to the inconvenience of being fitted over again.

This is the second time the dentist's office has been robbed within a year. The first time the thief took \$75 worth of teeth.

BUNGALOW ON WHEELS.

Traveling in a "home on wheels," Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Basel, of Milton Junction, Wis., arrived at Marysville, Ore., recently on their way home.

Mr. and Mrs. Basel are comfortably quartered in a neat little house built on a motor car chassis. The house is 6 by 6 by 13 feet, contains a cooking gallery, lavatory, table, chairs and bed. There are three windows on each side of the house and one in the rear. The house is built of basswood and covered with canvas. The floor is covered with rugs and the windows curtained. They have traveled 4,750 miles in their nomadic home.

NEGROES WALK TO ENLIST.

Eight negroes who walked from Longview to Dallas, Tex.—124 miles—to enlist in the army were keenly disappointed the other day when told at a local recruiting station that all negro regiments are recruited to full strength and that no negroes are being taken.

After pleading in vain that they be permitted to join the army anyway, the negroes said they would walk back to Longview. Replying to a question by a recruiting officer as to whether he had ever suffered from disease, the leader of the negroes said he was in "puffeek" health and had never had "nothin' 'cept a smile."

He and his comrades looked the part, all being strong, husky young men and none the worse for their long "hike."

GERMAN TRAVEL RESTRICTED.

Fewer trains and higher fares are the order of the day in Germany, says an Associated Press correspondent. The restriction of railroad traffic is very drastic. Whereas formerly twenty-nine trains ran in each direction daily between Berlin and the West, now there are only thirteen. Between Berlin and the East previously there were thirteen or fourteen connections; now the number is limited to five or six.

The increased railroad fares will become effective January 1, 1918, and are in addition to the tax on reserved seat tickets, which already amounts to 16 per cent. for first class, 14 per cent. for second, 12 per cent. for third and 10 per cent. for fourth class tickets. The general increase in fares will be 10 per cent.

IN BUYING COURT PLASTER PUBLIC MUST BE CAREFUL.

The Department of Justice authorized the following statement relative to its investigation of sales of germ-infected court plasters in various sections of the United States:

"The Department of Justice, without sharing in any sensational view as to the manner in which sticking plaster or court plaster became infected, states that some of the samples submitted and analyzed have been thereby shown to contain tetanus germs. The public is consequently cautioned against purchasing this remedy except from approved sources, the warning being particularly directed against purchases in small packages from street peddlers and vendors.

"The samples of sticking plaster mentioned by Secretary of Commerce Redfield will be analyzed immediately."

RUSSIAN WOLVES.

In the course of last winter's campaign the wolves of the Polish and Baltic Russian stretches had amassed to such numbers in the Kovno-Wilna-Minsk district as to become a veritable plague to both Russian and German fighting forces. So persistent were the half-starved beasts in their attacks on small groups of soldiers that they became a serious menace even to fighting men in the trenches. Poison, rifle fire, hand grenades, and even machine guns were successively tried in attempts to eradicate the nuisance. But all to no avail. The wolves—nowhere to be found quite so large and powerful as in Russia—were desperate in their hunger and regardless of danger. Fresh packs would appear in place of those that were killed by the Russian and German troops.

As a last resort, the two adversaries, with the consent of their commanders, entered into negotiations for an armistice and joined forces to overcome the wolf plague. For a short time there was peace. And in no haphazard fashion was the task of vanquishing the mutual foe undertaken. The wolves were gradually rounded up, and eventually several hundred of them were killed. The other fled in all directions, making their escape from carnage the like of which they had never encountered. It is reported that the soldiers have not been molested again.

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

1,200 MEN IN COLLEGES TRAIN FOR AIR CORPS.

There are now more than 1,200 candidates for the Aviation Corps in training at the University of Illinois, the University of Texas, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of California, and the University of Ohio. A hundred are being trained at the ground schools which were opened at Princeton and the Georgia Institute of Technology on July 2. The six ground schools first named are expected to graduate an average of 150 a week every week from now on and, beginning five weeks hence, when Princeton and the Georgia Institute also begin to turn out graduates, the total for the country will be swelled to 200 a week, or a prospective 10,400 graduates during the next year.

LOCKED DOG IN TOWER.

The big city clock in the 600-foot tower on College Hill, Rome, Ga., was stopped by a dog.

When City Timekeeper Williamson went to wind the clock two days before, as he does every week, a dog followed him on the winding stairway and when the timekeeper left he did not notice that he had locked the dog in the clock when he closed the door that leads to it.

For two days, without water or food, the dog whined and barked 600 feet above the city, but, of course, was not heard.

Then people of the city looking at the clock saw that it had stopped, and some one notified the timekeeper, who went to see what was the matter. He saw the dog lying against the big pendulum, snarling savagely. A policeman brought the animal safely to earth. It was almost starved by its two days' fast, but has recovered.

SNOWS CAUSE DEATH OF ELKS.

Many of the elk in the two principal Yellowstone herds perished through the conditions which existed this year, due to an exceptionally heavy winter snowfall and the late oncoming of spring, says Popular Mechanics. Deep, crusted snow prevented elk from getting at their usual feed, and the weakened animals, especially the calves, died rapidly in spite of the large supplies of hay provided by the Government for such emergencies, which were soon exhausted. One of the herds, numbering more than 20,000 elk, usually winters around Jackson's Hole, in Wyoming, and is known as the southern herd. The Biological Survey had provided over 600 tons of hay for feeding them, but the losses amounted to possibly one-third of the entire number, including practically all last year's calves. The northern or park herd is estimated to contain 30,000 elk, and these were widely scattered in search of food, with considerable losses probable.

TO BANISH EGG SHAMPOOS.

J. D. Kimerer, a barber of South Bend, Ind., has a scheme to save 250,000,000 eggs a year for the consumption of the people. He has put his plan before National Food Director Hoover and received from him assurance of its consideration. Kimerer would do away with the egg shampoo during the war. He says that on an average, which is considered low, each barber in the United States gives three egg shampoos a week, using two eggs. Recent statistics show that there are 300,000 barbers. Thus if the Government placed a ban on egg shampoos for men it would mean the saving of 93,600,000 eggs each year, provided each barber averaged but three shampoos. But other barbers in the city say the average of three is too low and that it would be nearer six or eight. Figured at that rate, more than 200,000,000 eggs could be saved. It is a hard matter to get at the number of eggs used by women for shampooing, inasmuch as many do their own work. However, a hairdresser estimates that 50,000,000 eggs are used each year.

NEW GOVERNMENT STEAMER.

The Department of Commerce announces that the new steamer Surveyor, of the Coast and Geodetic Survey, is expected to arrive at Washington this week to receive her equipment of instruments.

The Surveyor is an all steel vessel of 1,000 tons displacement, designed for work as an offshore surveying ship in the north Pacific and particularly off the coast of Alaska. She is 183 feet long, with 34 feet beam and 12 feet loaded draft. Power is furnished by a single triple-expansion engine of 1,000 horsepower. Oil is used as fuel in the boilers.

The Surveyor has a storage capacity of 75,000 gallons—enough to carry her 5,000 miles at full speed or 7,500 miles at working speed.

The vessel is equipped with water tanks and storerooms sufficient for a period of six months, and is designed to keep the sea without making port for several months at a time. The refrigerators are exceptionally large so that the crew may have fresh meats and vegetables while distant from port for considerable periods during the long surveying season.

The Surveyor will carry a full equipment of surveying instruments, including two sounding machines, one electrically driven and one steam driven. Her boat equipment consists of four motor-driven launches, two whale boats and several dories. The radio equipment was designed, made and installed by the Bureau of Standards of the Department of Commerce.

GOLD PLATED COMBINATION SET.

Gold plated combination set, with turquoise stone. Price 10c. each by mail, postpaid.
H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn. N. Y.



STAR AND CRESCENT PUZZLE.

The puzzle is to separate the one star from the linked star and crescent without using force. Price, 10 cents; 3 for 25 cents, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co.,
163 W. 23d St., N. Y.



MAGIC CARD BOX.—A very cleverly made box of exchanging or vanishing cards. In fact, any number of tricks of this character can be performed by it. A very necessary magical accessory. Price, 15c.

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LUCKY PENNY POCKET PIECE.



This handsome pocket piece is made of aluminum, resembling somewhat in size and appearance a silver dollar. In the center of the pocket piece is a new one-cent U. S. coin, inserted in such a way that it cannot be removed. (U. S. laws prevent our showing this coin in our engraving). On one side of the pocket piece are the words, "Lucky penny pocket piece; I bring good luck," and the design of a horseshoe. On the opposite side, "I am your mascot," "Keep me and never go broke," and two sprigs of four-leafed clover. These handsome pocket pieces are believed by many to be harbingers of good luck.

Price 12 cents; 3 for 30 cents; by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn. N. Y.

DEVIL'S LOCK PUZZLE.



Without exception, this is the hardest one of all. And yet, if you have the directions you can very easily do it. It consists of a ring passed through two links on shafts. The shanks of this puzzle are always in the way. Get one

and learn how to take the ring off. Price 15c, by mail, postpaid, with directions.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn. N. Y.

ELECTRIC CIGAR CASE.



This handsome cigar case appears to be filled with fine cigars. If your friend smokes ask him to have a cigar with you. As he reaches out for one the cigars, like a flash, instantly disappear into the case entirely out of sight, greatly to his surprise and astonishment. You can beg his pardon and state you cigars left in the case. A slight pressure on sides of case causes the cigars to disappear as if by magic. By touching a wire at bottom of case the cigars instantly appear again in their proper position in the case. As real tobacco is used they are sure to deceive any one. It is one of the best practical jokes of the season. A novelty with which you can have lots of fun.

Price 35 cents, sent by parcel post, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., N. Y.

MYSTERIOUS PLATE LIFTER.

Made of fine rubber, with bulb on one end and infusor at other. Place it under a table cover, under plate or glass, and bulb is pressed underneath, object rises mysteriously; 40 inches long. Price 25c., postpaid.
C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

GREAT BURGLAR PUZZLE.



The latest and most fascinating puzzle ever placed on the market. Patented May 30. It consists of four revolving dials, each dial containing 16 figures. 64 figures in all. To open the safe these dials must be turned around until the figures in each of the 16 columns added together total 40. The puzzle is made on the plan of the combination lock on the large iron safes that open on a combination of figures. Persons have been known to sit up all night, so interested have they become trying to get each column to total 40, in this fascinating puzzle. With the printed key which we send with each puzzle the figures can be set in a few minutes so as to total 40 in each column.

Price 15 cents; mailed, postpaid.

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THE BALANCING BIRD.



It measures more than four inches from tip to tip of wings, and will balance perfectly on the tip of your finger nail, on the point of a lead pencil, or on any pointed instrument, only the tip of the bill resting on the nail or pencil point, the whole body of the bird being suspended in the air with nothing to rest on. It will not fall off unless shaken off. A great novelty. Wonderful, amusing and instructive.

Price 10 cents, mailed postpaid.

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SHERIFF BADGE.



With this badge attached to your coat or vest you can show the boys that you are a sheriff, and if they don't behave themselves you might lock them up. It is a beautiful nickel-plated badge, 2 1/4 by 2 1/4 inches in size, with the words "Sheriff 23. By Heck"

in nickel letters on the face of it, with a pin on the back for attaching it to your clothing. Send for one and have some fun with the boys.

Price 15 cents, or 3 for 40 cents; sent by mail, postpaid.

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THE ELK HEAD PUZZLE.



Just out and one of the most fascinating puzzles on the market. The stunt is to separate the antlers and rejoin them. It looks easy, but try it and you will admit that it is without exception the best puzzle you have ever seen. You can't leave it alone.

Made of silvered metal. Price 12c.; 3 for 30c., sent by mail, postpaid.

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THE SPIDER WEB PUZZLE.



A very interesting little puzzle. It consists of a heavily nickeled plate and brass ring. The object is to get the ring from the side to the center and back. This is very hard, but we give directions making it easy. Price, 10 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

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383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.



2 to \$500 EACH paid for hundreds of old Coins. Keep ALL money dated before 1895 and send Ten cents for New Illustrated Coin Value Book, size 4x7. It may mean your Fortune. CLARKE COIN Co., Box 95, Le Roy, N. Y.

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SECOND SPARKLER.



Hold discs in each hand and twist the strings by swinging the toy around and around about 30 times. Then move the hands apart, pulling on the discs and causing the strings to untwist. This will rotate the wheel and cause the sparks to fly. The continued rotation of the wheel will again twist the strings. When this twisting commences slacken the strings slightly until they are full twisted, then pull.

Price 25 cts. each by mail, postpaid.
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BLACK-EYE JOKE.



New and amusing joker. The victim is told to hold the tube close to his eye so as to exclude all light from the back, and then to remove the tube until pictures appear in the center. In trying to locate the pictures he will receive the finest black-eye you ever saw. We furnish a small box of blackening preparation with each tube, so the joke can be used indefinitely. Those not in the trick will be caught every time. Absolutely harmless. Price by mail 15c. each; 3 for 25c.

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TRICK CIGARETTE BOX.

This one is a corker! Get a box right away, if you want to have a barrel of joy. Here's the secret: It looks like an ordinary red box of Turkish cigarettes. But it contains a trigger, under which you place a paper cap. Offer your friend a smoke and he raises the lid of the box. That explodes the cap, and if you are wise you will get out of sight with the box before he gets over thinking he was shot. Price 15c., postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

THE MODERN DANCERS.



These dancers are set in a gilt frame, the size of our engraving. By lighting a match and moving it in circular form at the back they can be made to dance furiously, the heat from the match warming them up. If you want to see an up-to-date tango dance send for this pretty charm.

Price, 15 cents, or 3 for 40 cents, sent by mail, postpaid.
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THE QUESTION PUZZLE.



Two links in the form of question marks, fastened together at the top. The object is to disengage one link from the other. It cannot be done without the directions. Price 10c. by mail, postpaid, with directions.

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A very handsome fountain pen case to which is attached a pocket holder neatly made of metal and highly nickel-plated. When your friend desires the use of your pen and gets it, he is very much astonished when he removes the cap by the sudden and loud noise of the explosion that occurs, and yet a little paper cap does it all. Price, 35c. by mail, postpaid.

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Made in the exact shape of a submarine. With this comical little instrument you can give a bride and groom one of the finest serenades they ever received. Or, if you wish to use it as a ventriloquist, you will so completely change your voice that your best friend will not recognize it. Price, 12c. by mail, postpaid.

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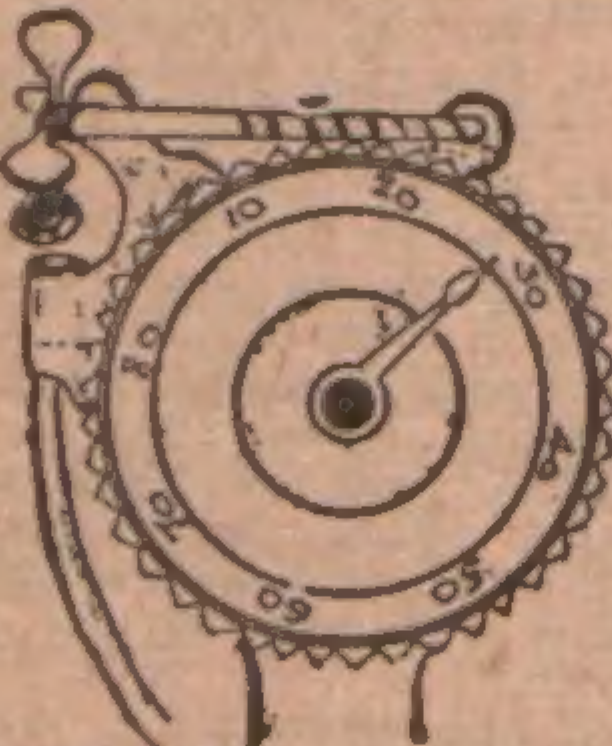
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A number of rings. The scheme is to link them together just exactly the same way magicians link their hoops. It looks dead easy. But we defy anybody to do it unless they know the secret. Price 10c. by mail, postpaid.

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